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# PEOPLE POWER CAN ARGUE CASE FOR 'C'

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**RIGHT TRACK:** High-speed trains in Kent have just finished their first year in service. Search 'Trains'

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Dungeness B  
Reactor

■ BY NICK AMES

PEOPLE can have their say about whether a third nuclear power station should be built at Dungeness at a meeting this weekend.

The Government's latest plans for the future of energy generation excluded Dungeness, but a request from Folkestone and Hythe MP Damian Collins and Shepway District Council secured Saturday's meeting.

It will start at 10.30am at the Assembly Rooms, New Romney. Mr Collins and Shepway deputy leader Cllr Rory Love met energy minister Charles Hendry to put their case.

Supporters of a Dungeness 'C' nuclear plant on the Marsh say it will be a source of jobs as well as contributing to the UK's future energy needs. But opponents say the area is too important for wildlife and plants.

Mr Collins said: "The meeting will be attended by Department for Energy officials and will give us the opportunity to put our case."

Cllr Love said: "I hope people use this opportunity to make their views known, put their questions and help shape the Government's nuclear strategy. We shall continue to press for a long-term future for Dungeness to safeguard jobs on Romney Marsh."

Dungeness is the site of two power stations, known as 'A' and 'B'. 'A' was built in 1965 and is no longer in operation, while 'B' is scheduled to cease activity in 2018.

The site is renowned for birdlife and hosts an RSPB reserve. The headland also is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a National Nature Reserve, a Special Protection Area and a Special Area of Conservation.

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# Wintry weather blows in rare visitors at reserve

■ BY NICK AMES

THE cold winter of prolonged snow and frosts has resulted in the mass movement of a number of bird species, with an influx of waterfowl and wetland birds on the Dungeness peninsula.

At the RSPB Dungeness reserve numbers of Bewick's swan increased throughout December reaching a peak of 146. The swans mostly feed out on nearby Walland Marsh during the day and return to the reserve after dark to roost on the pits.

Bewick's swans, wigeon, shoveler and white-fronted geese all recorded in nationally important numbers in December.

Bitterns have also been seen in record numbers. Eleven birds have been counted on a single day, which is double last winter's total, when five birds were recorded.

The weather conditions have allowed some unusually good views. With water frozen on the small pools and reedbeds, feeding opportunities were reduced and the birds were forced to congregate around the edge of the still open Burrowes pit.

Having got used to feeding in these new areas, the bitterns have remained despite the improving weather conditions.

From the visitor centre, people have been able to enjoy watching as many as five birds and three others have been seen feeding in front of the Scott hide.

Bob Gomes, site manager, said: "Coupled with the nesting that



Picture RSPB



**TAKING SHELTER:** A significantly higher number of bitterns have been seen at the RSPB's Dungeness reserve this year

northern Europe is the likely cause of such an influx.

Until 2002, only one or two birds were seen each winter, but after this numbers increased to three or more. The previous maximum count was eight, in January 2009, when extremely icy conditions forced birds out into the open to feed.

The RSPB's Dungeness reserve is proving the perfect destination and the birds have gone from strength to strength after work was carried out to improve their vital reedbed habitat.

Bittern safaris and wildfowl walks are being run to give even more people a chance of seeing this usually elusive bird, along with some of the other winter migrants.

For details call 01797 320588 or go to [www.rspb.org.uk/dungeness](http://www.rspb.org.uk/dungeness).

occurred in the summer, this clearly demonstrates the potential of Dungeness as a future British hotspot for this endangered species.

"It is normal for our resident population to increase, due to the influx of birds escaping the generally harsher winters of continental northern Europe, but such high numbers are unprecedented."

The harsh winter weather across

Eastern and Coastal Kent **NHS**  
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We are holding a showcase event, which gives you the opportunity to find out more about some of the 36 services we provide like community dentistry, physiotherapy and community nursing.

A question and answer session near the end of the Showcase will give you the chance to ask any burning questions to the directors that manage your community services.

Information about how social services, charities and local voluntary organisations can help you will also be available.

On 27 January 2011, starting at 11am and finishing at 1pm, the Showcase will be held at:

The Ark,  
Noah's Ark Road,  
Dover,  
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Tel: 01304 225737



The Eastern and Coastal Kent Community Health NHS Trust Board Meeting in Public will also take place at The Ark on the same day starting at 1:30pm and closing at 4:30pm. Refreshments are provided between the Showcase and the Board Meeting.

Copies of the Board Papers are available on our website, please visit [www.eckcommunityservices.nhs.uk](http://www.eckcommunityservices.nhs.uk).

For questions relating to the Board Meeting please contact Jill Mackenzie on 01233 667840 or email [jill.mackenzie@eastcoastkent.nhs.uk](mailto:jill.mackenzie@eastcoastkent.nhs.uk).

# Eurostar revenue increase

CROSS Channel train operator Eurostar has reported a continued recovery in business travel, contributing to a 12 per cent rise in annual revenue.

Ticket sales rose to £760m in 2010 from £675.5m the previous year, the company said.

Passenger numbers also increased by three per cent to 9.5 million, compared with 9.2 million in 2009, with more people choosing to travel beyond Paris and Brussels to destinations in the South of France, Germany and Holland.

However, the company was also affected by the severe weather conditions experienced in the UK and on the continent in December, with thousands of passengers having to queue for hours at stations in London, Paris and Brussels.

A Eurostar spokeswoman said that in the week before Christmas, the firm ran 80-90 per cent of services, but added it also carried a lot of airline passengers who were unable to fly because of disruption at airports.

"This uplift is due to the continued recovery of the business market that



has been a trend through the year, as well as growth in the overall number of passengers choosing high-speed rail over plane for short-haul travel in Europe," the company said.

And Eurostar's chief executive, Nicolas Petrovic, said he saw "considerable potential for growth and expansion".

In October, the group announced an investment programme of £700m,

which is due to begin this year and will see the complete overhaul and redesign of its existing fleet, as well as the purchase of 10 new trains.

At the moment Eurostar is the only company that runs passenger train services through the Channel Tunnel, but German train operator plans to run services from London to Frankfurt and Amsterdam from 2013.

# Film is our chance to be heard, says stammerer

IT HAS received critical acclaim, landed Colin Firth with a Golden Globe for Best Actor and is tipped to clear up at the Oscars.

But for one group of people, Hollywood film *The King's Speech* has proved to more than just a good night out at the cinema.

The blockbuster, starring Firth as the Queen's father, King George VI, is the story of how he overcame his debilitating stammer to make him feel worthy of the throne.

Nigel Wilson, who lives in Folkestone and has suffered with a stammer since the age of three, said the film has given people with the neurological condition the chance to finally be heard.

The NHS worker said, for once, the 720,000 children and adults in the UK who stammer will be understood.

"There are misconceptions around stammering, one of which is that people with stammers are stupid, which just isn't true," he said.

"Unless it is caught early, stammering can't be cured – what we have to do is manage it and this was presented in the film.

"I think *The King's Speech* will raise awareness that stammering is not an easy thing to overcome."

Mr Wilson, who works with disabled children as a clinical technologist, said the condition has had a major impact on his life.

"I left school at 16 with a CSE in metalwork. I started secondary school at midstream, but I was moved into a remedial class because of my stammer," he said.

"Now I have a masters degree and other degree-level qualifications, which shows that, had I had support in school, maybe I wouldn't have been put in the lower stream."

Mr Wilson said while he had a suc-

BY MARIJKE COX

cessful 16-year career with multinational company Xerox, moving through the ranks to a senior position, he chose to leave after struggling with communication.

"In my managerial role I had to make conference calls to factories in places like Malaysia and Hungary and it was very difficult to do this – I didn't know if people were laughing on the other end or the phone or what they were thinking," he said.

"Having to introduce myself was hard, as trying to say my name is the worse thing, it's one thing I can't avoid.

"You can learn tricks to cope with face-to-face situations but it's harder over the phone. For example in a pub I can point to the bitter I want – the other day though I went in and asked for a beer and the landlady laughed at me."

Mr Wilson said stammering can be severely disabling which is not always recognised.

He said it was often difficult when socialising, but admitted it had not stopped him.

As well as trying his hand at stand-up comedy, Mr Wilson said he had also gone speed dating – where people have just three minutes to make a good first impression.

"Trying to find a job is very hard, when almost all job adverts will say they need someone with excellent verbal communication skills."

Mr Wilson said *The King's Speech* explored the methods used to manage stammers, where Australian speech therapist Lionel Logue used then-unorthodox treatments to help the King which are still used today.

"I've had different therapy over the years," said Mr Wilson.

"In one case I spoke with a metronome where you have to speak



**RAISING AWARENESS:** Colin Firth as King George VI in *The King's Speech*, and right, Nigel Wilson, who has learned to manage his stammer



very slowly, but it's changed a great deal since then.

"Now it's much more holistic in nature. It's more to do with the cognitive side of speech and treatment, looking at the underlying causes.

"Stammering is just the tip of the iceberg – all the problems and anxieties that are going on below are the main issue."

For more information about the condition go to [www.stammering.org](http://www.stammering.org).

## Campaign over fuel price hikes

A LIB Dem activist plans to heap more pressure on his Coalition colleagues by blockading Britain's roads in protest at current fuel prices.

Shepway councillor Peter Carroll, right, who last year sold his Maidstone-based haulage firm Seymour Transport, aims to hold a "mass rally of vehicles" in the weeks to come as part of his FairFuelUK campaign launched last Sunday.

He claims the high price of diesel, combined with the rise in VAT and fuel duty, is crippling the freight industry, and has called on fellow hauliers to join a national protest.

As the founder of the highly-successful Gurkha Justice Campaign, Mr Carroll has a history of taking on the Government and winning.

"Spiralling fuel prices pushed higher by fuel duty rises are crushing the UK road freight industry," he said.

"It is pushing up prices and stoking inflation, which affects everyone."

The average price of petrol is cur-



rently just below £1.30 per litre while diesel has topped the £1.32 mark.

Motorists have also been hit by Prime Minister David Cameron's warning that the 'fair fuel price stabiliser' – a Tory manifesto promise – may now not be pursued.

But Mr Carroll aims to force Mr Cameron's hand by winning the same level of public support he and Joanna Lumley received for the 2009 Gurkha Justice Campaign, which

resulted in an embarrassing defeat for the then-Labour government.

Mr Carroll said: "I aim to hold mass rallies of vehicles in the coming weeks as we run up to the Budget so that the Government is in no doubt about the depth of this crisis."

Mr Carroll was the unsuccessful Lib Dem candidate for the Maidstone and the Weald constituency at the General Election, but has considered quitting his party after becoming increasingly disillusioned with its role in the Coalition.

He has appealed for support for his campaign from the Federation of Small Businesses and the Chambers of Commerce, but one group he will not be able to count on is the Tunbridge Wells-based Freight Transport Association.

Its chief economist Simon Chapman said: "Direct action may grab the headlines but it wears thin with the public when journeys are delayed and lives are disrupted."

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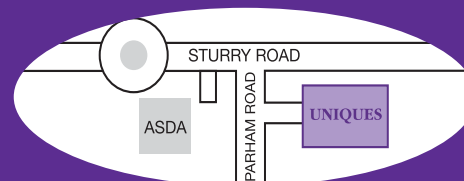
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# Stroke services lead the way in national review

STROKE patients in east Kent receive the most support in the country when they leave hospital, according to a new report.

The findings are in a major review by the Care Quality Commission, which looked at all primary care trusts in England.

After topping the list for support in coping with life after a stroke, Sarah Andrews, the director of nursing for NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent, said she was pleased all the hard work to bring the services together had been recognised.

She said: "The results emphasise the significant contribution made to improving these services by NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent and their providers, Eastern and Coastal Kent Community Health NHS Trust and Medway Community Healthcare.

"It has taken months of planning to introduce the services that make a difference to people's lives. Our providers are working hard to ensure patients can get access to the services they need.

"Participating in this review has shown how far we have progressed in developing high-quality services but we recognise there is always more work to do. Good care once patients leave hospital is vital to help them return to as normal life as possible."

Dr David Smithard, interim medical director, said: "The care of people who have had a

■ BY NICK AMES

stroke is a long term problem with no quick fix. We have worked hard to improve and deliver care in the community from the time of discharge from hospital.

"Our rehabilitation teams and stroke nurses endeavour to provide personalised care to all of those people requiring our services.

"These services have developed over the last ten years to reach the high standards that we see today and the staff involved are to be congratulated."

The commission looked at services and information available to people who had suffered a stroke during a period of a few weeks in 2010.

Overall, the review found that in eastern and coastal Kent there was quick response from community-based rehabilitation teams who were able to carry on care and support in patients' own homes.

The report also stated services to support the carers of stroke survivors at home were excellent and the range and quality of information provided to survivors and their carers was of a high standard.

It said survivors and their carers were made to feel involved and to make contributions to their plans of care and there was evidence of close collaboration between the hospital, community, voluntary and other services.

## Time and tide take toll on arches



URGENT action is needed to secure the concrete arches which protect the Wear Bay Road area of Folkestone, says Shepway council.

A public exhibition on the future of the arches – an iconic part of the coast at Sunny Sands – was held to highlight their plight.

The arches form part of the 340-metre Coronation Parade built in 1938 to protect the cliffs. Coronation Parade also acts as a maintenance access for National Grid and Southern Water engineers.

Tides have damaged the arches over the years and minor land slips have already taken place. If further erosion is caused, some properties along Wear Bay Road could even be put at risk. In 2009, Shepway council was given

Environment Agency funding to carry out condition checks on Coronation Parade to identify what work was needed.

Checks showed repairs were needed to the concrete structure, parts of the cliff needed stabilising and the eastern end of the parade needed strengthened.

The examination uncovered cracks in the structure and erosion of a concrete cover for the steel framework.

Some of the steel itself was found to be corroded and if this was to worsen the structure would be in danger of collapse.

The cost of the scheme is estimated at £5.8 million and the council will be applying for Environment Agency funding.

## Inspiration tops the menu



**HUNGRY FOR KNOWLEDGE:** Students at work in the K College kitchens

THE advantages of a healthy diet and how to cook were on the menu for students at the Folkestone campus of K College.

In a move inspired by celebrity chef Jamie Oliver and his show which encourages those with no knowledge of the culinary arts to get in the kitchen, the youngsters created their own meals and invited parents along to eat with them.

Soup, stir-fry with plenty of vegetables, and apple crumble were the dishes they came up with.

Els Howard was running the project, which saw many students who had not cooked before being given the chance to

develop their skills. "It's part of a Government initiative called the Inspiring Communities Project," she said.

"It has been set up to get students to engage with other people and inspire them in many areas.

"This one is all about healthy eating and cooking. The students prepare and cook the food, then settle down with their guests to eat it. We are always reading about problems with the diets of some young people. This is away to encourage and show them the benefits of healthy eating."

To have a look at what was cooking at K College, go to [www.yourkenttv.co.uk](http://www.yourkenttv.co.uk).

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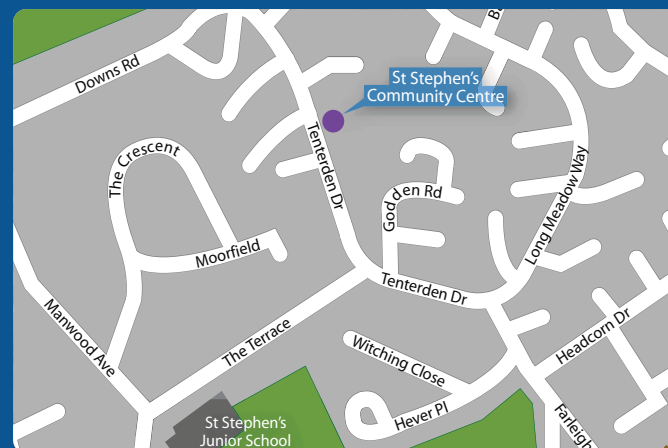
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million to the economy in the Canterbury district.

The project represents a £60 million direct investment by the University during construction of the project that will, in turn, deliver significant local employment opportunities, as well as increased expenditure in the local economy.

ARCHANT KOS MEDIA CAMPAIGN ISSUES COUNTYWIDE CALL TO ARMS TO KENT BUSINESSES

# Time to roll up our sleeves and work together for prosperity

■ BY STEVE KNIGHT

THIS newspaper calls on employers throughout the county to join together and support our new campaign to Keep Kent Working.

With unemployment at its highest rate in years and Government spending cuts in full force, now is the perfect time for businessmen and women across the region to collaborate and improve the Kent economy for all.

Our campaign aims to keep people in work, generate jobs and develop our talent for the future.

It will provide a forum for local companies to demonstrate what they are doing to aid the recovery – be it by taking on new apprentices or coming up with innovative new ways of working – while also acting as a launch-pad for firms to join together and share their expertise.

Archant KOS Media has faced difficult decisions itself in recent times, as have many businesses within the county.

Managing director Paul Stannard said: "We ourselves have had to make tough decisions, and it is from this backdrop that we decided to



do something positive and use our media as a vehicle for employers and organisations – as well as the wider community – to communicate how adaptable the business community in Kent is to dealing with change and to make sure the people of Kent know what opportunities are out there."

The Keep Kent Working campaign already has the backing of Kent County Council and the Federation of Small Businesses.

"Anything that gets businesses working together to create more employment opportunities for people – and especially young people – absolutely gets my backing," said Kent County Council's cabinet member for regener-

ation and economic development, Cllr Kevin Lynes. "There could be a little more thought between businesses about the beginning and the end.

"I'd like to reach a point where we are engaging really closely with the private sector to find out where the skills gaps will be in future, so we can address that and train up tomorrow's workforce today."

One of the main aims of the Keep Kent Working campaign is to encourage businesses to take on young workers, as a third of the county's unemployed are aged 18-24.

## Investing

Cllr Lynes pointed to KCC's support scheme for employers, which drastically reduces the bureaucracy involved with taking on an apprentice, as an example of how different organisations can work together for the benefit of all.

He added: "The benefit of investing in youth is that you get a huge amount of enthusiasm, energy and drive that comes with being young.

"Letting young people look at things with a fresh pair of eyes and question the way in which they do things can be so valuable to businesses, and can give them a serious edge over their competitors."

The Keep Kent Working campaign manager

Claire Trevill, who has vast experience of business in Kent, says she fully understands what employers and employees are going through.

She has worked closely with the Government's Future Jobs Fund and is acting as a business mentor for young people with the Prince's Trust charity.

"Everyone is aware that these are tough economic times, but that creates an opportunity for doing things differently," said Miss Trevill. "And that includes how businesses recruit their staff and how they take on apprentices and offer graduate placements.

"Our proximity to London has also become a blessing and a curse, because we lose many of our best workers there. But now's the time to stop the brain drain and for Kent employers to fight back and keep the talent here.

"Keep Kent Working is a positive campaign and I'm pleased this newspaper is giving employers and employees the platform to communicate good employment practice as well as to raise awareness of what help is out there to keep Kent strong."

To achieve the aims of our campaign we will need everyone to contribute. We may lead the Keep Kent Working initiative, but we also welcome any ideas or suggestions.

• Show your support for Kent's economic prosperity by emailing [keepkentworking@kosmedia.co.uk](mailto:keepkentworking@kosmedia.co.uk).

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## YOUR LETTERS

### Don't let fuel thieves make off with yours

Theft of heating and diesel oil has been a problem for many years and the police have always noticed an increase in this type of crime whenever the price of crude oil rises and temperatures start to plunge outside, due to a rise in demand.

This makes oil a more attractive proposition for the thief and they are now actively targeting fuel tanks at farms, transport depots and domestic properties.

The thief may be using the oil for their own central heating or selling it on at a handsome profit.

Although it may seem like a bargain at the time, I strongly advise not to buy from unregistered oil traders. Not only does this practice mean that the cycle of thefts continues, but as it is unregulated, the oil could become contaminated by being stored in dirty tanks and actually cause thousands of pounds worth of damage to boilers and generators.

If the price seems to good to be true – it probably is!

It's worth buying a good quality

lock for the tank, such as a close shackle padlock, which are difficult to remove with bolt cutters.

Remote electronic oil level gauges are also available which will set off an audible alarm if the oil level in the tank suddenly drops or falls below a quarter full.

In addition, thieves will not wish to force their way through or over a prickly hedge. The smallest trace of blood or shred of ripped clothing could help police identify the offender.

Using defensive planting around your tank, provides an effective and decorative thief proof barrier.

**Jerry Prodger**  
Maidstone Neighbourhood Inspector

### Tax dodgers deserve visit from the bailiffs

Looking at your story on the front page last week Tax Dodgers Have Nowhere to Hide, you could think that the council is being harsh.

Using bailiffs to collect owed money may be an extreme measure, but it is a necessary evil to stop others having to fork out and make up the difference.

At some point someone has to stand up and say this is what you owe, now pay it! And I am pleased

that our council has the gumption to do that.

Too many people get away with not paying tax when the rest of us pull our weight, so it only right that those who have not paid are made to.

Now all we need is the council to stand up and get a few more things done with this new found gumption.

Do that and Maidstone might just make it out of this mess we call a democracy.

**Wendy, a Maidstone resident by email**

### Gift a goat to help in fight against poverty

Oxfam Unwrapped's goats are an extremely effective way to help improve the lives of poor people, using locally-sourced, responsibly-distributed livestock to make a massive difference in more than 60 countries.

We launched our range in 2004 and the goat gift is a popular choice – for the gift buyer, there's obvious appeal, but for the family that receives the goat, it becomes absolutely central to their lives.

They can not only be used for milk or food but as an asset to trade, giving families access to credit for food during low seasons or an income to send their children

to school and then growing their wealth as it produces kids.

At Oxfam we know only too well the impact that the environment has on poor people and are careful not to upset existing ecological balances.

We don't bring in goats from other areas – we redistribute livestock within villages, so the environmental impact is minimal.

We also assess the potential impact on natural resources by talking to local people who have detailed knowledge of grazing patterns and feeding practices.

Animal welfare is considered every step of the way and our programme guidelines are endorsed by the RSPCA.

We never promote animal husbandry above agriculture. But in some areas it is simply too dry to grow enough crops, so raising livestock is the only option.

Thanks to people's generosity we have raised an incredible £60 million to help thousands of people living in poverty around the world.

**Rick Lay, Oxfam Unwrapped campaign manager**

### Meningitis vigilance crucial during winter

I am writing to thank all your readers who supported the

Meningitis Trust during 2010.

It's only with the help of local communities that we are able to continue our vital work helping to rebuild lives shattered by meningitis.

The Meningitis Trust relies entirely on voluntary donations, which means support from individuals, families, schools, nurseries and businesses to survive.

This year we celebrate our 25th anniversary; a quarter of a century of supporting people as they face life after meningitis.

Meningitis can strike anyone, of any age, at any time. Those who survive can be left with devastating after-effects including loss of hearing, sight, brain damage and, where septicaemia (blood poisoning) has occurred, loss of limbs.

The Meningitis Trust urges people to be vigilant of the symptoms and trust their instincts. Symptoms can include, fever, headache, stiff neck, dislike of bright lights, drowsiness, joint pain, vomiting, diarrhoea and, in some cases but not all, a rash that doesn't fade under pressure.

For more information, call the trust's freephone 24-hour helpline staffed by nurses on 0800 028 18 28 or log on to [www.meningitis-trust.org](http://www.meningitis-trust.org).

Thank you all once again and best wishes for 2011.

**Anne Currie, Meningitis Trust**

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## QUESTION & ANSWER

### JOHN BAILEY



**Q** Tell us a little about yourself.

**A** I'm 59 and took early retirement from a major PLC just over two years ago. I'm married and have two grown-up kids. I live just outside Ashford.

**Q** When did you first become interested in the First World War and military history?

**A** My father and all my uncles were in the forces in WWII and I was brought up hearing stories from the war. I acquired my first military item when I was about seven years old. I swapped a Mars bar for a brass Spitfire that a school friend's father had made in the RAF. I've still got it. I became very interested in the First World War after visiting the Somme in the mid 1980s and was amazed by what I saw. I then started researching my two grandfathers' part in the Great War.

**Q** What inspired you to set up Still in the Trenches in Folkestone?

**A** I had done a little spare time trading in militaria and felt that Kent needed a five-day-a-week military history shop where people could buy interesting and genuine items at reasonable prices.

Many military collectors' shops have closed as the internet has grown, but I saw a need for people to be able to see and touch things before they buy them. In collecting, condition is very important and many people are often disap-

pointed with things they buy over the internet. I also restore items and will track things down for people. I can sometimes do research into customers' grandfathers' WWI history.

**Q** Tell us about the flag you recently discovered.

**A** I bought the flag from a local collector who had acquired it 12-15 years ago. It was made by a French woman in Calais during 1944 to welcome the liberating troops. It's made mainly from parachute silk, plus what looks like the gold edging from a tablecloth. It is quite crudely made. I am investigating a couple of leads on the French woman, but it's early days yet.

**Q** What are the favourite items in your collection and why?

**A** I do like military paperwork, such as the documents a soldier would have had in his service from recruitment to discharge. I have those papers for my father and one of my grandfathers and it is far more human than the metalwork and hardware of war. I've also got a lot of Home Guard training manuals and papers. I think the Home Guard was amazing.

**Q** What kind of items would typically be considered of historic military significance?

**A** There are many iconic items that come from the two world wars. The Lee Enfield rifle was probably the finest service rifle ever

and has become a classic. It had a British service life of 60 years and is still going strong in India. Similarly the Mills grenade, which was designed in 1915, modified in 1917 and then remained in service for another 55 years completely unchanged. I also think First World War medals are potent symbols of the terrible experiences soldiers had of trench warfare.

**Q** What do you think of the social and cultural life of the area?

**A** My wife and I moved to Ashford from south east London four years ago and wished we had done it earlier. The quality of life here is far better, with the superb countryside and coastline. There seem to be many more people actively trying to make Kent a better place.

**Q** How can people find out more about you and Still in the Trenches?

**A** They can learn a lot from the website but also I'd like them to come to the shop in the Old High Street, Folkestone. I like to chat with my customers and have had some incredible people in the shop - D-Day veterans, serving soldiers, Blitz survivors, and V1 witnesses. Recently a marvellous lady who was in the French resistance visited the shop.

**Q** Tell us something that people don't know about you.

**A** In the mid 1980s I qualified as a pilot and even got to fly a WWII military aircraft.

**Q&A**

The owner of wartime memorabilia shop Still in the Trenches spoke to **James Alexandre** about his fascination with military history, the significance of a handmade flag and the joys of living in Kent.

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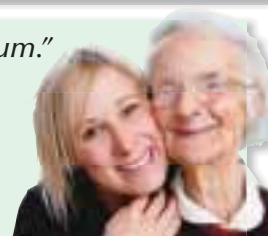
The apartments have a fitted kitchen, a level access shower in addition to a bath and full wheelchair access. Facilities also include a laundry and residents' lounge where you can socialise with fellow residents. For entertaining your own visitors, there is a function room and a hotel style guest room for putting up family and friends.

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## Jobless total falls despite downturn

UNEMPLOYMENT fell by 21 per cent in Medway last year, new figures have shown.

The decrease equates to 1,658 fewer claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance across the towns.

At the beginning of 2010, Medway had 7,659 residents claiming the allowance but by the end of the year that figure had fallen to 6,001.

The 21 per cent fall was larger than the national average of 15 per cent during the same period.

Youth unemployment, affecting 18 to 24 year olds, also fell more in Medway than in any other unitary authority across the entire country, dropping 770 to 1,760 – 30 per cent.

This is nearly twice as much as the national average fall of 15.4 per cent and a stronger fall than the regional average of 24 per cent.

### Support

Medway Council's economic growth boss, Jane Chitty, said: "In spite of the recession, we refused to allow this to distract us from the real opportunities and we stand by our commitment to support the people of Medway.

"We are determined to help get Medway back to work and while I am delighted at these figures, I accept there is more to be done and we are looking at a range of initiatives to ensure we don't lose momentum.

"Medway Council has responded to the recession by securing funding from central government and ensuring our residents have the services and advice they need to get back into work, whether that be further training, CV advice or personalised support."

# Give Flowers deal time to grow, savers urged

■ BY STEVE KNIGHT

THE chief executive of Kent Reliance Building Society has asked its members not to make rash judgements over the £50 million deal with JC Flowers.

A minority of savers who voted against the agreement – which represents the first private-sector investment in the mutual banking sector – claim the business will now no longer be run with their best interests at heart.

JC Flowers, which has offices in New York and London, is a private equity investment firm focused on the financial services industry.

Run by billionaire and Harvard graduate J Christopher Flowers, the firm failed in its attempt to purchase Northern Rock before the bank was saved by the British taxpayer in 2008.

But while admitting his new partners will ultimately want to make a profit, KRBS chief executive Mike Lazenby said it was too early to make predictions about the future of the business.

"We will continue to run as a mutual until JC Flowers owns 90 per cent of the business, which is a long way off," he said.

"They have also agreed not to pay any dividends to investors for the next five years, which



**NEW DEAL:** But some Kent Reliance savers are worried

is an incredibly long time in business. For example, five years ago we couldn't possibly have imagined the economy would be the way it is today.

"If they decide after five years they want their money back – and it's not been agreed that they will – then that would give us the option to buy them out.

"It's not a given that everything will be over and we'll become a proper bank.

"Five years is a long way off and a lot of things will happen before then. In the meantime we'll be going back to lending people money, which we haven't been able to do for some time, and we'll be offering some pretty good rates."

With assets of more than £2.2 billion, KRBS

is the 12th largest building society in the UK and has served the people of the county for more than 150 years.

At least 75 per cent of KRBS members had to vote in favour of the JC Flowers deal for it to be passed, and it scraped through with 75.8 per cent of the ballot.

The Chatham-based society will now transfer all of its business, assets and liabilities to a new bank called OneSavings, which is expected to become effective on February 1, pending approval from the Financial Services Authority.

In the meantime KRBS has been busy securing eight new branches in towns as far away as Gloucester, Bristol and Devon, which Mr Lazenby says would not have been possible without the £50m investment.

And despite once describing high street branches as "liabilities", he is also looking to expand the business and open more offices on home turf in Kent.

"There will always be people who want to access a high street branch," said Mr Lazenby.

"But we have to make sure they're in the right place and that they will be used when they're open, otherwise they're just a drain on our resources.

"For example, our agency in Strood [at First Call Mortgage Services in the High Street] is totally inappropriate for what we're using it for. But we want to keep a presence in the town so we'll be opening a new office in its place."

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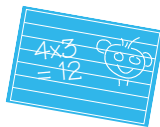
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## BREAK TIME

### Baccalaureate a blow to grammars

A CONTROVERSIAL scoring system introduced to boost the number of pupils studying traditional academic subjects has exposed failings in Kent's grammar schools.

Official statistics revealed that while selective schools continue to excel in GCSEs, under the English baccalaureate scheme many are lagging behind.

The qualification is awarded to pupils who achieve five A\* to C grades in English, maths, a science, a foreign language, and a humanity.

Schools were previously only judged on the number of pupils who achieve five A\* to C grades in any subjects.

At the Harvey Grammar School in Folkestone, only 27 per cent of pupils received the baccalaureate certificate, and just 33 per cent at Dover Grammar School for Boys.

While six selective schools in Kent achieved above 80 per cent – with Dartford Grammar School gaining the highest at 97 per cent – others only managed to scrape average scores, and six fell below 50 per cent.

Twenty-eight grammars, however, had 95 per cent or more of their pupils achieving five A\* to C grades, including English and maths – Maidstone's Invicta Grammar School achieved 100 per cent for a second consecutive year.

Education secretary Michael Gove said including baccalaureate results in the league tables would help tackle the slump in the study of core subjects.

However, headteachers say it is unfair on schools where less academic pupils do well in vocational courses.

# Pupils put under pressure in battle to pass Kent Test

■ BY MARIJKE COX

PARENTS of children as young as five are trying to hire private tutors for 11-plus coaching as the demand for grammar school places rockets.

Tutors across the county said they had been inundated with calls from parents desperate to start preparing their children, despite the exam, known as the Kent Test, being up to six years away in some cases.

The influx is being blamed on the huge demand for grammar school education. Last September 10,947 youngsters aged 10-11 sat the test for just 4,475 places in the academic year starting in September 2011.

Tutors said competition was fierce and parents were going to extreme lengths to secure their child a place.

Kent and Medway tutor Patricia Matthewman, principle of the Eleven Plus Academy, said year five, aged 9-10, was young enough to start coaching.

"I don't believe starting younger than that is beneficial," she said.

"We have had parents asking for tutoring for younger children and we've turned them away. Some calls were for year three children (7-8) and others even younger, specifically for the 11-plus.

"General tutoring in subjects such as creative writing is fine at any age, but tutoring for the 11-plus at a young age does not help.

"I can understand why parents want to do this, but it really is unsuitable. Coaching for 12



**ALL WORK, NO PLAY:** Pupils are being put under too much pressure at an early age, say education experts

months before they take the test is adequate."

Mrs Matthewman said the high demand for grammar school places was pushing parents to try and start tutoring early.

But another Kent tutor, who works in the Maidstone area, said the idea tutoring would secure a grammar school place was misguided.

"It's more about the child. Even the brightest won't always be suitable for grammar schools," she said.

"I've been contacted by parents with children of five asking for 11-plus tutoring, but it's too young – year five is the right time."

The tutor, who asked not to be named for professional reasons, said she had been inundated with requests.

"I've had parents call up about children as

young as six. "There's a year four girl (aged eight) whose parents asked if she could have in excess of an hour's tutoring, which is too long for someone that age.

"I think the demand for places is because of the view that grammar schools are better than other secondaries, which isn't necessarily right."

Figures from Kent County Council showed 10,947 children sat the Kent Test in September, 2010, to start secondary school in the 2011 academic year.

A spokesman said even if a child passes the exam it does not necessarily mean they will be given a grammar school placement.

"Many grammar schools are their own admissions authority," he said. "KCC cannot guarantee that a grammar-assessed child will be offered a grammar school.

"Parents will need to look at the oversubscription criteria of individual schools to identify the likelihood of securing a place."

Marian Darke, south east regional secretary of teaching union the NUT, said there was too much pressure being put on children to pass the Kent Test.

"There is more and more pressure to get them through the test, rather than allowing them to enjoy their education," she said.

"It's making it all about succeeding or failing, and this isn't good for children.

"Pressure is being put on parents because they are being led to believe to get a good education you have to go to a grammar school, which isn't right.

"Education should be about developing, not about labelling children who don't go to a grammar school as failures. Tutoring young children puts far too much pressure on them."

**SEND your schools news and pictures to [dave.mairs@kosmedia.co.uk](mailto:dave.mairs@kosmedia.co.uk). You can also upload your video clips of schools events on to [www.yourkenttv.co.uk](http://www.yourkenttv.co.uk).**

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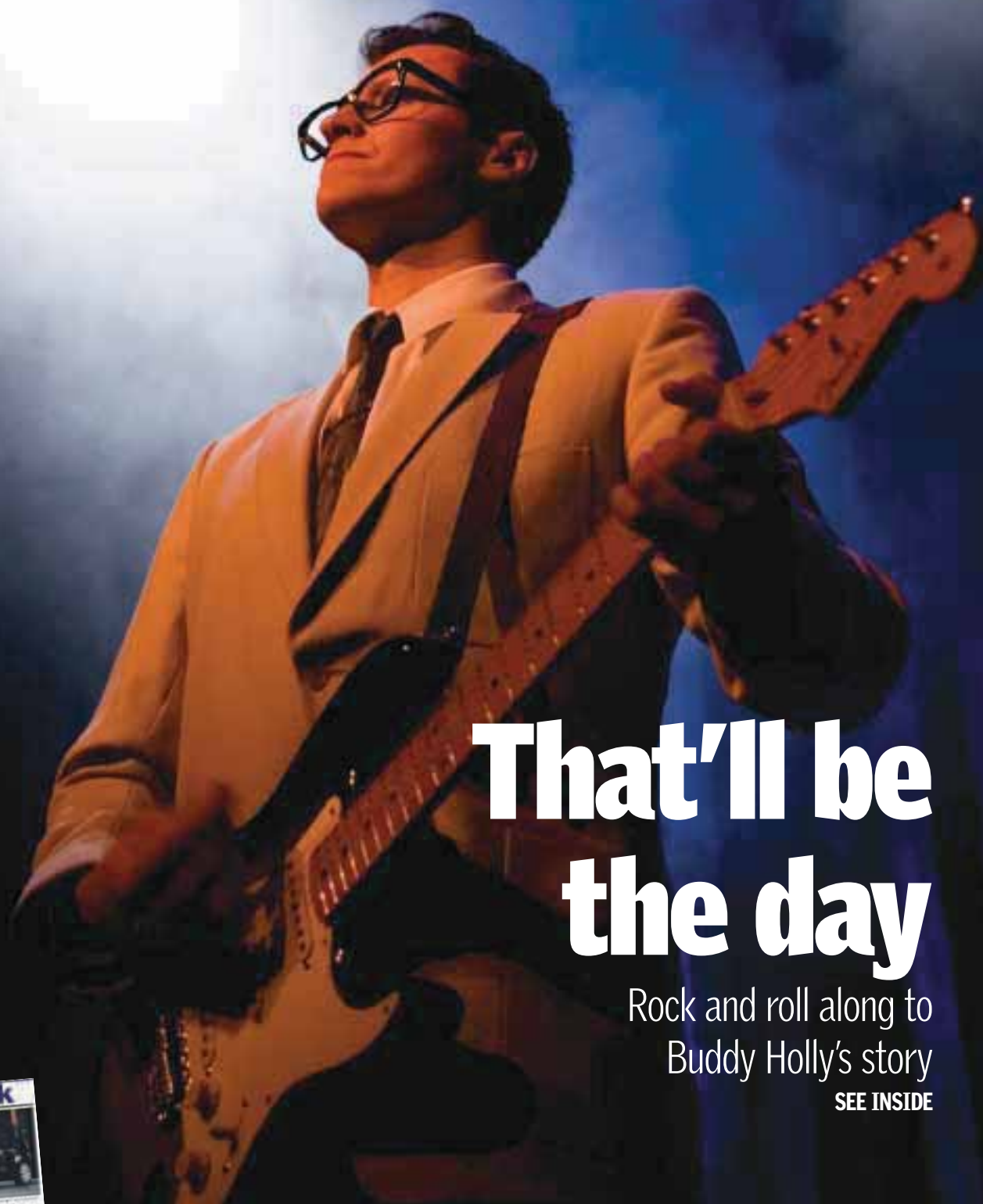


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# your lifestyle



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Buddy Holly's story

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A BURLESQUE workshop takes place at the Astor Theatre in Deal from 2-3.30pm on Saturday, January 22.

Miss Maybe's monthly classes will increase your confidence and inspire you to get your feathers and sequins out.

Workshops also take place on February 18, March 19 and April 16. No dance experience required, and there is no nudity, but plenty of fun and giggles.

Contact Miss Maybe on 07870343870 for more information.

**Sleeping Beauty dates**

A PRODUCTION of Sleeping Beauty will delight dance fans at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley, on February 1 and 2.

Founded in 1988 by former Bolshoi soloist and choreographer Victor Smirnov-Golovanov, Moscow City Ballet has become one of Russia's most successful touring companies and their take on the ballet is not to be missed.

Tickets range from £29.50 to £33.50 and are available from [www.ambasadortickets.com](http://www.ambasadortickets.com) or by calling the box office on 08448 717 620.

**Don't miss TV comic**

TOP comic Andy Parsons, of Mock the Week fame, will tickle funnybones when he comes to the Central Theatre in Chatham.

The funnyman is in town on March 17. Tickets are £14 or £16. Book early to avoid disappointment. Call the box office on 01634 338338, or visit [www.centraltheatre.co.uk](http://www.centraltheatre.co.uk).

**Banksy's dramatic joke?**

EXIT Through The Gift Shop is a cruelly-entertaining account of street artist Banksy's relationship with a wacky super-fan.

But is this a straightforward documentary about the world of street art, or is the joke on us?

The film shows at The Astor Theatre in Deal on Monday, January 31 at 8pm. Ticket prices are to be announced. Visit [www.theastor.org](http://www.theastor.org) for more details.

**Keeping it in the family**

THE Floorboard Family will play the Chimney Boy, in Faversham, on February 2.

The Faversham Folk Club gig features family members Francis Kendall, Richard Kilner and Jason Rose. Together they write, sing and play roots, ballads and blues as well as "good time" music.

Entry is £7, or £6 for members. Visit [www.favershamfolkclub.net](http://www.favershamfolkclub.net) for details.

**Dine to best of blues**

BLUES Junction present a night of the very best of the blues at Pizza Express, Maidstone, on Saturday.

Starting at 8pm, there will be music from the Blues Junction, band who specialise in blues music from Chicago to Delta to West Coast to British. They cover classics by the likes of Eric Clapton, BB King, Buddy Guy, Muddy Waters, Albert King, Etta James, Howlin' Wolf, and Robert Cray.

Tickets are £15 each from [www.pizza-expresslive.com](http://www.pizza-expresslive.com).

# Remembering a rock 'n' roll hero

**BUDDY - THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY**

Tuesday, February 1, to Saturday, February 5  
Orchard Theatre, Dartford.



THE world's most successful rock 'n' roll musical has had audiences rocking in the aisles for decades, and it's back in Kent soon.

Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story will come to the Orchard Theatre in Dartford next month, 52 years after the legend's passing and "the day the music died".

That famous phrase was coined by Don McLean, in the song 'American Pie'.

Holly died in a plane crash, but his legacy was already cemented.

That fateful day will forever be ingrained on the memory of Maria Elena, widow of Charles Hardin 'Buddy' Holley (the 'e' was dropped after his name was misspelled on a recording contract).

Each year she commemorates the passing of her husband, who was just 22 when he died, in the same way.

"I pray for Buddy, like I do every night," she begins. "I light a candle, I buy flowers, and stay home. I just remember him as he was when I met him."

The couple had been married less than six months when the small plane carrying Buddy, 17-year-old Ritchie Valens, J.P. 'the Big Bopper' Richardson, 28, and pilot Roger Peterson, 21, plummeted from the night sky into a frozen Iowa cornfield.

Though the 50 years that have passed have dulled some of the pain, the shattering impact of the accident still remains with Maria Elena.

"When Buddy died it was so sudden," she reflects. "Those kinds of deaths are very, very difficult to deal with because you don't have the chance to say goodbye."

The circumstances surrounding Buddy's inclusion on the Winter Dance Party Tour of 1959 only add to the sense of tragedy.

"He left home against my will, I was pregnant," she says. "He said 'it will be a short tour - I just can't continue without getting my own money to do what we're planning to do.' We had plans to open record companies and our own publishing company, and Buddy also wanted to develop new artists, even at that time."

To commemorate this special occasion, the smash-hit West End musical Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story will be rocking The Orchard, Dartford, with a performance on the anniversary of Buddy's death, proving that the music, like Buddy's legacy, lives on.

Maria Elena Santiago was 25 when she and Buddy married in August 1958, less than two months after they first met.

Folklore has it that Maria Elena had a premonition about the crash before he left for the tour.

"Absolutely, as a matter of fact we were both dreaming," she confirms.



"Buddy had a dream about leaving me on top of a building and I dreamed about a comet, this great ball of fire coming down. It came past me and made a hole in the ground. I could see the fire coming out of that hole."

"The day after (Buddy) was leaving and I was packing for both of us, but he said 'I told you, I can't bring you with me, you're pregnant.'"

Having discovered news of the crash on tel-

evision, Maria Elena says she fell into a "catatonic state", unable to digest what had happened. She miscarried soon after.

The show has been a worldwide smash, and recalls the heyday of the legendary Holly.

All the hits are here and tickets will sell fast.

Tickets, priced between £20 and £27.50 each, are available from [www.orchardtheatre.co.uk](http://www.orchardtheatre.co.uk), or by calling the box office on 01322 220000.



# Reader Holidays

KOS 23/01/11

## Corinth Canal, Greek Isles & Istanbul

Escorted Rail-Cruise - afternoon departure from London



Departures: May 5, June 14, September 2 &amp; October 2, 2011

**PORTS OF CALL:**

• Embark France - Marseilles • Italy - Genoa • Greece - Katakolon, Santorini, Mykonos, Piraeus & Corinth Canal  
• Turkey - Istanbul • Sicily - Messina • Disembark Marseilles

**INCLUDED:**

• Escorted throughout  
• Champagne Check-in at London St Pancras  
• Daytime rail travel: London-Marseille-London  
• Overnight stay in Lille or Paris outbound  
• 10 night Full Board cruise on the Louis Coral  
• All transfers abroad  
• Full ABTA financial protection

**12 DAYS FROM**  
**£1149pp**  
Quote CG-KOS

## Eastern Mediterranean

Escorted Rail-Cruise - afternoon departure from London



Departures: March 12 &amp; November 12, 2011

**PORTS OF CALL:**

• Embark France - Marseilles • Malta - Valletta • Egypt - Alexandria & Port Said • Israel - Ashdod • Cyprus - Limassol • Crete - Heraklion • Italy - Naples & Genoa  
• Disembark in Marseilles

**INCLUDED:**

• Escorted throughout  
• Champagne Check-in at London St Pancras  
• Daytime rail travel: London-Marseille-London  
• Overnight stay in Lille or Paris outbound  
• 12 night Full Board cruise on the Louis Majesty  
• All transfers abroad  
• Full ABTA financial protection

**14 DAYS FROM**  
**£1099pp**  
Quote ME-KOS

## Tuscany Coast & Country

Escorted Rail-Cruise - afternoon departure from London



Departs May 16 &amp; September 19, 2011

Join us for a journey of discovery to the most beautiful region of Italy with an enchanting landscape and historic towns.

**ITINERARY/INCLUDED:**

• Champagne check-in at London St Pancras • Escorted throughout • Afternoon departure on Eurostar to Paris or Lille • 1 night hotel B&B in Paris or Lille • TGV rail travel to Nice • 7 nights in Marina di Pietrasanta, Italy, at Hotel Villa Ombrosa with 7 buffet breakfasts & 7 dinners with free wine & water PLUS Free tea/coffee daily, PLUS nightly Free Bar • Included excursions take in Lucca, Pisa, Florence, Portovenere (pictured) & San Gimignano • Travel home on overnight train, Florence to Paris, in 2-berth cabin, then Eurostar to London • All transfers abroad

**10 DAYS SEMI ALL-INCLUSIVE**  
**£1099pp**  
Quote TC5/9-KOS

## Pisa's Luminara di San Ranieri, Tuscany & the Riviera of Flowers

Escorted Holiday by Rail - afternoon departure from London

Departs June 14, 2011

Come with us to the magical city of Pisa which has far more to offer than the leaning tower. In June the Luminara di San Ranieri creates a breathtaking spectacle of light with 1000s of candles lighting the River Arno, riverside buildings and bridges.

**ITINERARY/INCLUDED:**

• Champagne Check-in at St Pancras • Escorted throughout  
• Afternoon departure on Eurostar to Paris  
• 1 night hotel B&B in Paris • TGV train travel to Nice • 3 nights at the Hotel Arnolfo in Montecatini and 6 nights at the Garden Hotel in Allassio • 9 breakfasts • 9 dinners  
• 2-hour Guided tour of Florence  
• Included excursions in Italy: take in Pisa, Florence, Santa Margherita, Portofino, Cervo & Diano Marina; in France: Monaco, St Paul de Vence & Antibes • Return rail travel to London  
• All transfers abroad

**11 DAYS**  
**£1099pp**  
Quote AT6-KOS

## Black Forest & Alsace Wine Route

Escorted Holiday by Rail - morning departure from London



Departs June 20, 2011

This magical holiday combines the romance of international rail travel with dramatic scenery and warm hospitality in a rolling landscape with serene lakes, pretty villages and ancient vineyards.

**ITINERARY/INCLUDED:**

• Escorted throughout • Morning departure on Eurostar to Paris or Lille • TGV train travel from Paris or Lille to Strasbourg • 6 nights at the 3-star Hotel Baren-Stube, Oberharmersbach, with 6 breakfasts and 6 dinners • Excursions take in Freiburg, the Triberg Falls, Lake Titisee, Strasbourg & the Alsace Wine Route • Rail travel from Strasbourg to London • All transfers abroad

**7 DAYS**  
**£789pp**  
Quote BB6-KOS

## Menton Lemon Festival & Nice Carnival

Escorted Holiday by Rail - afternoon departure from London



Departs February 20, 2011

Join us for a colourful break on the French and Italian Riviera including visits to Menton Lemon Festival Garden of Lights and Nice Carnival Flower Parade. Enjoy Free Drinks every night at the hotel in Diano Marina and return rail travel between London and Nice, south of France.

**INCLUDED:**

• Champagne check-in at London St Pancras • Escorted throughout • Afternoon departure on Eurostar to Lille  
• 1 night hotel B&B in Lille • TGV rail travel to Nice  
• 4 nights in Diano Marina at the Piccolo Hotel with 4 buffet breakfasts & 4 dinners with free wine & water PLUS Free tea/coffee daily, PLUS nightly Free bar - house wine/beers/spirits 6pm to 12midnight • Included excursions • Return rail travel to London • All transfers abroad

**6 DAYS SEMI ALL-INCLUSIVE**  
**£699pp**  
Quote LM2-KOS

## Mamma Mia Party

Warner Bembridge Coast Hotel, Isle of Wight - Over 50s only



Friday, February 25, 2011

Join us for a party where the name of the game is fun. We're rekindling the 70s & 80s when Abba's songs were on everyone's lips.

**PRICE INCLUDES:** FREE drinks from 3.30pm to 11pm Friday, 12noon to 11pm Saturday & Sunday. Includes house beers & spirits, house wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers, tea & coffee • Dinners & Breakfasts • Mamma Mia movie screening • Abba Tribute Band • Variety entertainment • En-suite Ambassador room with TV, tea/coffee tray - upgrades available • Leisure facilities: Indoor pool & sauna • Return Car Ferry

**SELF-DRIVE 3 NIGHTS DRINKS-INCLUSIVE**  
**£239pp**  
Quote MW2-KOS

## Mamma Mia Party

Warner Bodelwyddan Castle, North Wales - Over 50s only



Friday, March 25, 2011

Join us for a unique Mamma Mia Party - for over 50s only - in beautiful North Wales. Warner's Bodelwyddan Castle Hotel will resound to the sights and sounds of Abba. Enjoy free drinks and nightly entertainment including a screening of Mamma Mia the Movie and an Abba tribute act.

**INCLUDES:** Free Bar 6pm to 11pm daily - house beers, spirits & mixers, wine by the glass • Entertainment including a Mamma Mia the Movie screening and Abba tribute act • 3 dinners & 3 breakfasts • En-suite Ambassador room with TV, tea/coffee tray - upgrades available

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## THE NEW SQUADRONAIRES

Friday, February 4, Woodville Halls, Gravesend

DO YOU remember the original Squadronaires from the 1940s?

Officially known as the No 1 RAF Dance Band, the musicians soon adopted the unofficial name 'The Squadronaires' and went on to win the prestigious Melody Maker award for five consecutive years. Their successors will enthral at this show in Gravesend.

Originally formed by the RAF, with a view to emulating the popularity with the troops of the American bands of the day, and to help boost morale, the Squadronaires went on to surpass even the most popular of the American bands. The orchestra was reformed under

the leadership of trumpet player Greg Francis (the bandleader of the Memphis Belle Swing Orchestra and the movie Memphis Belle) and a change of presentation and musical content was made.

Based on, and as a tribute to, the wartime orchestra, the band consists of young musicians, looking as they did then, and playing the swing music of the era, including Glenn Miller Tommy Dorsey Harry James Benny Goodman Artie Shaw and more.

The show starts at 8pm. Tickets are £15, or £13 for concessions. To book, call the box office on 01474 337774.



## THE THREE DEGREES

Friday, January 28, Central Theatre, Chatham

THE Three Degrees can't wait to see you again.

The longest-running line-up of the group comes to Chatham this month to wow audiences with a full playlist of their hits.

Once famously known as Prince Charles's favourite group, the trio will delight fans eager to hear their music again.

Boasting more than 40 years in the business and with some timeless classics in their repertoire, their best-known hit, When Will I See You Again? will no doubt feature on the evening.

The Three Degrees were formed in about 1963 in

Philadelphia and were discovered by producer and songwriter Richard Barrett, who was responsible for groups of the 1950s such as The Chantels, Little Anthony and the Imperials, and The Valentines.

Over a long career, the group slowly found their way to the top, really making their mark in the 70s and 80s with mainstream chart success.

The tour line-up is Cynthia Garrison, Valerie Holiday and Helen Scott. Tickets for the show are £19 or £21.50 each. Call 01634 338338 to book, or visit [www.whatsonmedway.co.uk](http://www.whatsonmedway.co.uk).



## ROY CHUBBY BROWN

Wednesday, January 26,  
The Orchard Theatre, Dartford



OFFENSIVE, controversial and hugely successful, Roy Chubby Brown is touching down in Dartford.

The flying hat and goggles-wearing Northerner has put more bums on seats than most other comics, and has one of the most devoted fanbases in the laughter business.

His ribald live routines are blue and draw huge crowds, no matter what town he's in.

Few subjects are deemed too sensitive to be touched on, and the language will be blue.

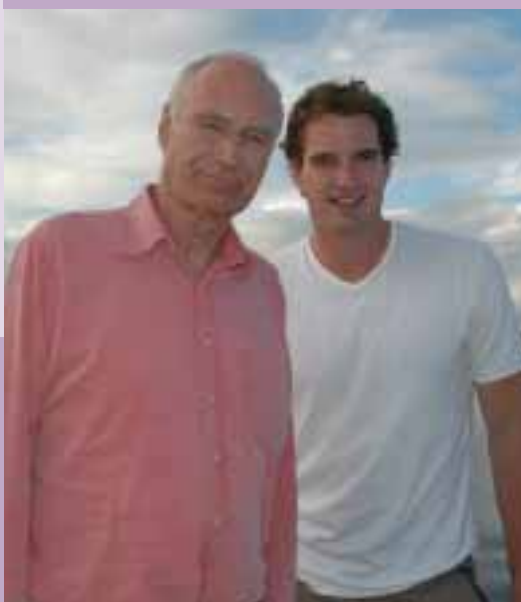
Get set for a barnstorming night of banter, hilarious mickey-taking and humour from Britain's most outrageous comedian, who uses a non-stop battering ram of jokes and tales during his shows.

You'll be in the presence of one of the scenes biggest characters but it's not for the easily offended.

The tour ends in April, but this is Chubby's only date in Kent. Tickets are £22.50 each from [www.orchardtheatre.co.uk](http://www.orchardtheatre.co.uk), or call 01322 220000.

Bookings of over 40 people will receive a free finger buffet, but call 01322 220000 for information.

The show starts at 7.30pm and is not suitable for children.



## AN AUDIENCE WITH PETER AND DAN SNOW

Sunday, January 30,  
The Orchard Theatre, Dartford



FATHER and son team Peter and Dan Snow have established themselves as two of the country's most watchable historians, with their popular TV shows.

Following the success of their books and popular television series, Battlefield Britain and 20th Century Battles, they present an entertaining evening as they discuss highlights and take audience questions.

Dan is Peter's youngest son and the pair have forged a close relationship presenting the shows since 2003.

Battlefield Britain looked at the massive battles that have shaped Britain's history, from Boudicca's destructive rebellion against the Romans to the incredible feats of The Few who saw off the Luftwaffe.

The show received a BAFTA and was shown on the BBC to great acclaim. The 20th Century Battles show which followed made them even more well-known.

Peter Snow was already a familiar face to viewers, due to his exploits as a Newsnight presenter and election specialist.

The show starts at 7.30pm. For tickets call the box office on 01322 220000.

## MARC ANTOINE AND PAUL BROWN

Friday, January 28, Pizza Express, Maidstone



THIS pair join the impressive roll-call of those who have played at Pizza Express in the last few months.

Playing songs from last year's Foreign Exchange joint album, Marc Antoine is well known to regulars, and Paul, aside from his solo musical projects, is also one of the leading producers in the smooth jazz world.

He is responsible for number one hits for various artists, including Pizza Express favourite Peter White.

Both men are excellent guitarists with a broad repertoire.

Marc Antoine has performed in the past with Basia, SoullISoul, Guru's Jazzmatazz, The Solsonics, Queen Latifah, acid jazz DJ GreyHoy, Rick Braun, Sting and the late Selena.

Paul Brown is the producer per se in the smooth jazz genre. He has performed with Al Jarreau, Boney James, Jeffery Osborne, Kirk Whalum, Larry Carlton, George Benson, Patti Austin and many more.

Paul and Marc will be joined by Oli Silk on keyboards, Otto Williams on bass and Tony Mason on drums.

The show is at 8pm. Tickets are £25 from [www.pizzaexpresslive.com](http://www.pizzaexpresslive.com).



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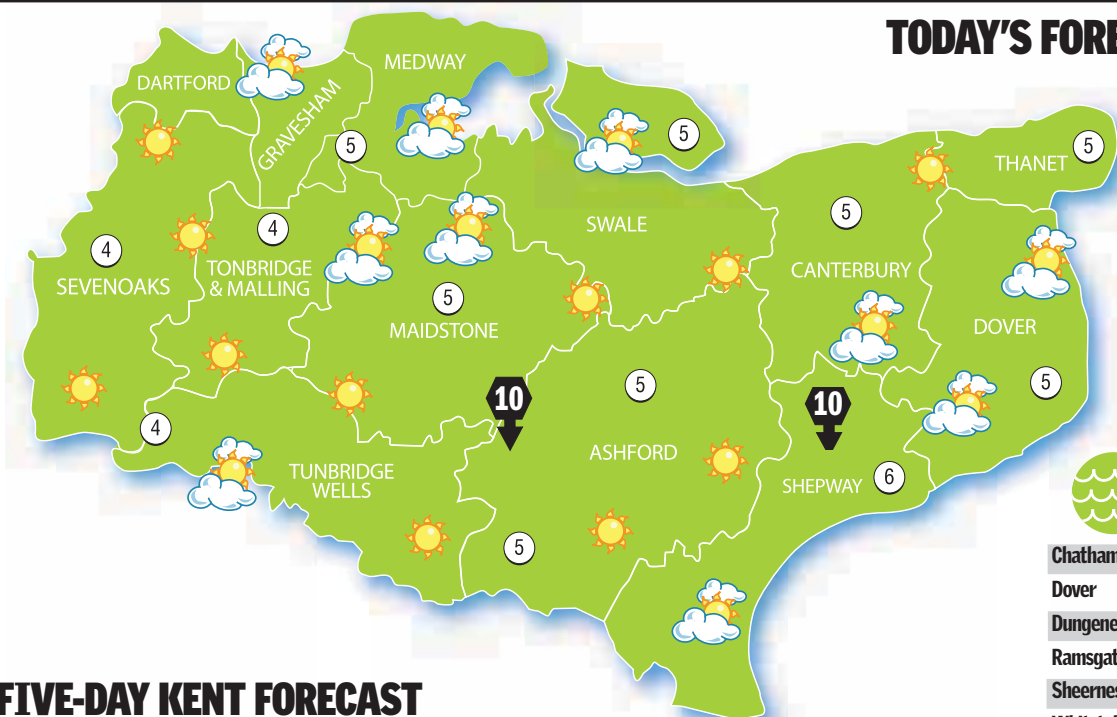
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## TODAY'S FORECAST



## AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Amsterdam	8°C	Madrid	5°C
Athens	13°C	New York	2°C
Barcelona	11°C	Paris	7°C
Beijing	-3°C	Rome	12°C
Bombay	29°C	Sydney	24°C
Cape Town	26°C	Tenerife	23°C
Cardiff	8°C	Tokyo	9°C
Gibraltar	16°C	Vancouver	11°C
Hong Kong	13°C	Warsaw	8°C
Las Palmas	22°C	Wellington	23°C



## KENT'S WEEKEND HIGH TIDES

Chatham	Saturday	2:29pm 6.4m	Sunday	3:13pm 6.4m
Dover	Saturday	12:37pm 6.8m	Sunday	1:24pm 6.8m
Dungeness	Saturday	12:33pm 8.0m	Sunday	1:15pm 8.0m
Ramsgate	Saturday	1:07pm 5.2m	Sunday	1:54pm 5.2m
Sheerness	Saturday	2:19pm 6.1m	Sunday	3:03pm 6.0m
Whitstable	Saturday	2:25pm 5.5m	Sunday	3:10pm 5.5m

## FIVE-DAY KENT FORECAST

	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon															
Ashford	7°C	6°C	5°C	4°C	6°C	Dover	6°C	5°C	6°C	5°C	7°C	Gravesend	7°C	6°C	6°C	5°C	6°C	Sevenoaks	5°C	4°C
Canterbury	6°C	5°C	5°C	4°C	6°C	Faversham	6°C	5°C	6°C	4°C	5°C	Maidstone	6°C	5°C	6°C	4°C	7°C	Sittingbourne	6°C	5°C
Chatham	6°C	5°C	6°C	4°C	5°C	Folkestone	6°C	5°C	6°C	5°C	7°C	Ramsgate	6°C	5°C	5°C	4°C	6°C	Tonbridge	6°C	4°C
Dartford	7°C	6°C	6°C	5°C	6°C	Gillingham	6°C	5°C	6°C	4°C	5°C	Rochester	6°C	5°C	6°C	4°C	5°C	Tun Wells	6°C	4°C



SUNRISE 7:52am SUNSET 4:21pm



MOONRISE 4:11pm MOONSET 7:22am

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## Women Seeking

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**BEAUTIFUL** slim, black female, HIV positive, good qualities, seeks genuine, kind, white male, 30-47 to share life with. Cambridge/London/Tunbridge Well. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356493

**LONELY** female, petite, attractive, size 8-10, blue eyes, long hair, likes historic places, holidays, meals out, seeks honest, genuine male for friendship initially. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356359

**HAPPY** fun loving, attractive, intelligent, educated, slim, curly female, late 40's, WLTm caring, sincere man interested in theatre, reading, arts, nature and walks for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356613

**ADORABLE** black female, 37, slim, affable, enjoys music, reading, theatre, laughter, nature, seeks genuine gent, 37-49 who is caring, N/S and lives near London. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 333815

**CONFIDENT** young female who knows what she wants out of life, looking for open minded, outgoing guy for adult conversations/meets. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356153

**BEV** petite and trendy with a nice figure, solvent, animal friendly and looking for soul mate up for lots of fun. Age/looks unimportant. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356149

I might be 47 but am certainly not over the hill yet! Attractive and looking for a good reason to get back in shape. Call me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356147

**LATE** 40's female, likes most things, animals, walks, cinema, seeks male 45-59 for good times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 348941

**29YR** old female, 5ft 3ins, size 12, long brown hair, seeks childless male, 29-40, Margate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383026

**ATTRACTIVE** black lady, 5ft 6ins, black hair, slim, kissable lips, likes walks, horse riding, go karts, seeks professional white male, 35-45, athletic, 5ft 11ins-6ft. London. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353897

**BLACK** female, likes meals out, theatre, seeks solvent white male, 30-47 for genuine relationship. Ashford. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382910

**41YR** old divorced female, likes astrology, writing, cats, seeks fun loving guy with GSOH. Rochester. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381528

**FIT** lady, 65, thinks she's 40, N/S, loves life, seeks genuine gent, 60-70 N/S for happy loving, exciting times. Gravesend. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353111

**VICKY** attractive, kind, down to earth, black British, likes travel, writing, reading, cooking, socialising, seeks generous, good man who is family orientated. Essex. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353033

**56YR** old female, 5ft 6ins, GSOH, N/S, likes socialising, cards, dancing, racket ball, seeks male, 50-65, Maidstone. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353773

**YOUNG** at heart 50's tall, slim, blue eyed blonde, honest, caring, seeks tall, strong, confident, young at heart male, 50-60. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 350337

**41YR** old lady, young at heart, blue eyes, long dark hair, seeks fun loving guy with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 346537

**YOUNG** black female, likes meals out, theatre, seeks solvent white male 30-47 for genuine relationship. Ashford. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382706

**SEALED** with a kiss, 37yr old single mum, blonde hair, blue eyes, curly, likes sunshine, travel, looking for Knight in shining armour, to make me laugh and spoil me. Folkestone. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355543

**PRETTY** black lady, 39, 36G bust, 5ft 3ins, likes reading, cinema, meals out, nature, travel, theatre, seeks tall, slim, professional white male, 35-50 who is honest, genuine, loving, funny and spiritual. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355311

**CRYSTAL** 5ft 6ins, long dark hair, hazel eyes, olive skin, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383374

**SUZANNE** 35, beautiful blonde, seeks discreet male for chats and a relaxing glass of wine anytime. ACA, status unimportant. City area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 342527

**DEBBIE** mid 50's, attractive, likes dancing, music, cinema, theatre, seeks male for companionship. Maidstone. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 351419

**MATCH** for a Leo. Tall blonde, early 60's, varied interests, likes music, travel, seeks N/S, caring male with GSOH. Ramsgate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 352627

**PATRICIA** outgoing, confident, feminine, warm, friendly, smart, good company, attractive, seeks similar male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 347215

**BEAUTIFUL** slim, babe, 22, seeks older, generous guy 65 plus who knows how to pamper. London. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 348545

**ATTRACTIVE** outgoing 64yr old lady, seeks genuine, retired, solvent, professional male for friendship. Kent. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 351929

**42YR** old female, likes music, dancing, writing, astrology, cats, seeks male with GSOH and similar age. Medway. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 351577

**SINGLE** mum, 39, likes most things, seeks male with GSOH for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 349999

**ADORABLE** beauty, curvy, caring, down to earth, trained lawyer, seeks good man for friendship, companionship, maybe more. London. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 351337

**COME** live with me. Medic, petite, stunning, long hair, seeks very rich, tactile, generous gent. I will care for you forever. Essex. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 351333

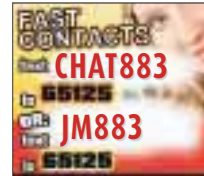
**PENNY** slim, sporty, attractive, excellent company, enjoys the outdoors, cycling, walks, sailing, theatre, travel, seeks intelligent, like-minded gent for friendship, maybe more. London. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 351273

**ANNA** 62, seeks guy, 59-65 with an interest in the simple things in life for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 346707

**62YR** old female, 5ft 4ins, blonde hair, green eyes, medium build, likes walks, keep fit, dancing, gardening, cooking, seeks male, 59-65. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 346705

**PETITE** female, slim, attractive, blonde hair, green eyes, GSOH, romantic, likes sports, nights out, meals, seeks honest, genuine, N/S male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 334613

**JACKIE** homely, 52, seeks genuine, homely male, 50-65 for caring, sharing and spoiling. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 350005



**LADY** seeks N/S, clean shaven male to appreciate artistic, romantic, feisty, attractive, slimish, curvy lady of 69 who has not yet joined the wrinkles. Ashford. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 349757

**WORLD** traveller, fit, young minded female, enjoys life, seeks special interesting male, 60's for genuine relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 349053

**KAREN** 34, sexy leggy brunette who knows there's more to life than just work! WLTm confident professional male for time off meals in London and fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 342525

**DAISY** sexy, voluptuous, leggy, blonde, seeks male, 76 plus who knows how to treat a lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 348889

**DOROTHY** 70's, 5ft, fair hair, likes coast, Chinese food, seeks male for companionship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 342451

**ELSIE** 5ft 8ins, 70's, OHAC, N/S, likes pub lunches, walks, seeks gent for company, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 348425

**JO** tall, blonde, blue eyes, sexy figure, seeks male for fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 347421

**ATTRACTIVE** slim, easygoing, lady, 30's, likes travel, nights in, seeks genuine, solvent white male, 36-48 for no strings relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 346955

**65YR** old female, 5ft 2ins, likes golf, reading, garden, holidays, seeks guy to share life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 340495

**NATALIA** attractive, brunette, brown eyes, 40's, N/S, slim, fit, friendly, seeks sincere, N/S, solvent male for love and relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 344393

**STRAIGHT** female, 60-75 seeking male companionship, no complications for fun and socialising, gay man welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 341379

**PROFESSIONAL** attractive, friendly, black British female, mid 40's, size 10-12 likes socialising, seeks sincere male of any nationality for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 341125

**TRACEY** 45, sexy Scorpio, tattooed, petite, affectionate, likes music, comedy, cinema, seeks tall, medium build, tattooed, easygoing male, 45-48 with GSOH. Maidstone. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 341045

**EMMA** 31, dark hair, brown eyes, attractive, outgoing, likes bands, cinema, meals out, seeks good looking male for fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 337213

**KIND** affectionate male, seeks likeminded lady. Tonbridge/Sevenoaks. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383518

**JOHN** 57, 5ft 11ins, medium build, easygoing, seeks female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383498

**MALE** seeks female, 62-65 for friendship, maybe more. Herne Bay. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383474

**TALL** attractive white male, 48, considerate, easygoing, likes arts, theatre, Oriental culture, seeks female of any age with similar interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356719

**WHITE** guy 50's, seeks black/Asian/Oriental lady for friendship, maybe more. Medway. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356689

**ALAN** young 46, attractive, green eyes, brown hair, 6ft, medium build, white, fun, loyal, N/S, seeks female for friendship/romance. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356671

**RICHARD** dark hair, blue eyes, 5ft 6ins, easygoing, loving, caring, likes holidays, theatre, countryside, cinema, historic buildings, music, walks, seeks female 38-56 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356389

**62YR** old male, 6ft 1ins, medium build, brown hair/eyes, seeks female, 62-65 for friendship, maybe more. Herne Bay. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356253

**GENUINE** white male, GSOH, seeks attractive, curly, black female, 33-43 with strong personality and in control of life for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356215

**GLADYS** sensual, loving, short hair, likes cooking, seeks Christian gent with no ties for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 340025

**WANTED** dates & mates! Kim 53, straight, seeks people for socialising, drinking, holidays etc. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 340019

**NICK** 43, petite blonde, green eyes, seeks genuine guy for company, fun, friendship and maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 339115

**ATTRACTIVE** slim single mum, 44, seeks similar tall male, 40-50, caring, loving and loyal, are you? Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 334393

**LISA** 42, medium build, likes cooking, walks, music, days in/out, WLTm caring, down to earth male, 40-50. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 332817

**JAN** 53, tall, brown hair, likes most things, seeks kind, loving, older, genuine male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 332497

**5FT** 2ins female, dark hair, medium build, late 40's, GSOH, likes cinema, walks, family life, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 350381

**DENISE** young 50, likes cuddles, nights in/out, seeks male, 37-47 for LTR. Erith. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382864

**DOWN** to earth and well presented, likes to wine and dine, show a genuine lady a good time, wants New Year to get off to a good start, meet that someone to take my heart! LTR in Ashford area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 351717

**MIKE** 6ft 2ins, grey hair, builder, enjoys life, likes walks, seaside, beaches, cinema, nights in, seeks honest, caring female for friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356081

**PETER** 57, blue eyes, full head of hair, likes sport, meals out, drinks, seeks nice, down to earth female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356067

**YOUTHFUL** 67yr old male, likes crotch dancing, seeks youthful partner, 45-65 for fun, laughter and friendship. Dartford. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 351553

**STRIKINGLY** attractive, tall, black man, London born, 45, very well dressed, athletic, seeks faithful, adventurous, truthful woman for unforgettable adventures. Am I asking too much? Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 350581

**RICHARD** 49, 6ft, slim, professional, GSOH, tactile, affectionate, likes most things, seeks slim, affectionate female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 349519

**PAUL** 48, slim, 6ft, seeks caring female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 348705

**GENUINE** male, 47, looks 37, likes shopping, sun bathing, travel, seeks female for platonic friendship only. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 348639

**AFFECTIONATE** white male, 61, 5ft 7ins, medium build, N/S, varied interests, seeks caring, black/Oriental female with GSOH for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 347933

**SHY** affectionate male, seeks 18-30yr old chubby, introverted girl for no strings fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383392

**NICK** 50's, 5ft 10ins, slim, fair hair, blue eyes, widow, loving, considerate, likes travel, meals out, socialising, culture, classic cars, boating, cycling, walks, seeks female up to 58. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 338657

**ANDY** fun guy, seeks attractive, assertive, open minded female for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 333965

**LOVING** male, 50, younger looks, slim, toned, seeks caring, slim female for romance and fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355611

**DEREK** retired, lonely, seeks retired lady for company, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355717

**MIKE** builder, 56, big build, glasses, mousy hair, likes beaches, walks, seeks female to share life with. Maidstone. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355567

**YOUNG** guy 40, likes nights out, seeks female for good times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355563

**JEFFERY** 52, white, 6ft 2ins, medium build, likes meals out, cinema, holidays, seeks single, genuine black female for 1-2-1 relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 348663

**MARK** 44, quiet, likes walks, cinema, meals out, seeks female, 35-44, Maidstone. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382680

**YOUSUF** likes cinema, sports, seeks slim, honest female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383386

**59YR** old male, always puts toilet seat down, likes animals, countryside, 5ft 7ins, heavy build, GSOH, seeks lady who likes to laugh. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355665

**PROFESSIONAL** successful male, 45, 6ft, adventurous, fun loving, romantic, seeks attractive, outgoing female to enjoy the good things in life with. Brighton. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355361

**YOUNG** 53 easygoing, affectionate, 6ft, N/S, animal lover, varied interests, GSOH, looking for a soul mate. Northfleet. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355085

**SHY** affectionate male, seeks 18-30yr old chubby, introverted girl for no strings fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383392

**RICHARD** 46, likes holidays, theatre, historic buildings, cinema, music, seeks female, 37-57 for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355867

**WHITE** male, 52, likes cinema, holidays, weekends away, seeks sincere, genuine, black lady, 35 plus for serious relationship. London. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354543

**RAMSGATE** male, 5ft 5ins, young 60's, caring, likes travel, countryside, seeks slim-medium build, attractive soul mate for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355743

**MALE** seeks trustworthy female for friendship and serious relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355739

**ATTRACTIVE** blond, blue eyed male, 47, HIV positive, genuine, sincere, GSOH, seeks warm, sincere female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355731

**DEREK** retired, lonely, seeks retired lady for company, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355717

**ANDY** funny, seeks likeminded female, 18-35. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355615

**WHITE** male, 63, blue eyes, active, N/S, seeks loving, caring, genuine female, 50-60, any nationality for TLC. Herne Bay. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355133

**YOUNG** looking 57yr old male, seeks petite, red headed female with lovely green eyes, 38-52 for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383182

**TRY** me! 56yr old male, down to earth, happy go lucky, likes salsa, ice skating, cinema, meals out, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Sittingbourne. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354999

**TOY** boy 20's, seeks Mrs Claus for a fantastic Christmas full of lust and passion. London. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354925

**MALE** likes most things, lonely, seeks caring female to put the sparkle back into life. Canterbury. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354385

**52YR** old businessman, seeks female to share good and bad times. Herne Bay. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354891

**YOUNG** good looking, medium build male, mid 30's, seeks mature, older female for fun and passionate evenings in this cold weather. London/Herts. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354877

**SIMON** tall, well built, good looking, fun, seeks female, Kent. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383150

**ATTRACTIVE** male, 42, OHAC, likes good things in life, seeks happy, fun loving lady. Single mum welcome. Medway. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383136

**SINGLE** professional male, N/S, attractive, 5ft 7ins, medium build, vegetarian, 50, young outlook, seeks white female for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354781

**ATTRACTIVE** blond, blue eyed male, 47, HIV positive, genuine, sincere, GSOH, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere, female. Essex. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354749

**YOUNG** looking 60yr old guy, 5ft 7ins, brown hair/eyes, likes lunches out, seeks slim-medium build female for friendship only. Crawley. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354713

## Gay Seeking

**32YR** old male, bi-curious, likes wine, cinema, camping, seeks male, 25-35 for loving ad maybe more. Could you be my Mr Right. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356183

**SINGLE** unassertive male, mid 40's, seeks assertive male of any age for fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 356269

**ATTRACTIVE** non scene gay hunk, late 20's, seeks older, solvent gent, 65 plus for mutual fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 348543

**KEVIN** 34, 6ft 2ins, blond hair, medium build, toned, young boyish good looks likes nights out, sports, holidays, seeks similar male, any age for adventurous fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355984

**BI** guy 37, seeks couple/bi guy for fun times. Canterbury. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383290

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# Swank toughs it out as devoted sister takes on US legal system

■ BY DAMON SMITH

FEW modern actresses embody working-class pluck and ballsiness on screen as compellingly as Hilary Swank.

She collected her first Oscar in 2000 for her scintillating portrayal of murdered transgender teenager Brandon Teena in *Boys Don't Cry*.

Five years later, Swank was back at the podium for her revelatory performance as a gutsy boxer in Clint Eastwood's tear-jerker, *Million Dollar Baby*.

She famously celebrated that victory by tucking into a hamburger and fries at a fast food restaurant with her coveted golden statuette resting on the table next to the napkins and condiments.

Now, the Oscar-winning actress gets beneath the skin of another crusading real-life heroine in *Conviction*.

Inspired by the story of a sister's unwavering devotion to her jailbird brother, Tony Goldwyn's film condenses an extraordinary 18-year quest for justice into a lean 107-minute courtroom thriller that confirms one (wo)man can make a difference.

Betty Anne Waters (Swank) is a wife and mother of two in Massachusetts, who has always defended her troublemaker older brother, Kenny (Sam Rockwell).

In 1980, Kenny is questioned about the murder of diner waitress Katharina Brow, but he is released, to the chagrin of local cop Nancy Taylor (Melissa Leo).

Two years later, ex-girlfriends Roseanna Perry (Juliette Lewis) and Brenda Marsh (Clea DuVall) testify against Kenny and seal a murder conviction, resulting in a life sentence without parole.

Betty refuses to accept the verdict and puts herself through college and law school in order to prove her brother's innocence.

Her marriage implodes, and she is left to



raise their two sons, Richard (Conor Donovan) and Ben (Owen Campbell).

Aided by law school pal Abra Rice (Minnie Driver), Betty brings the case to the attention of attorney Barry Scheck (Peter Gallagher), from the Innocence Project, a non-profit organisation set up to help wrongly-convicted people overturn their sentences.

*Conviction* is a remarkable true story that provides Swank with a meaty central role that wrings tears and fury in equal measure.

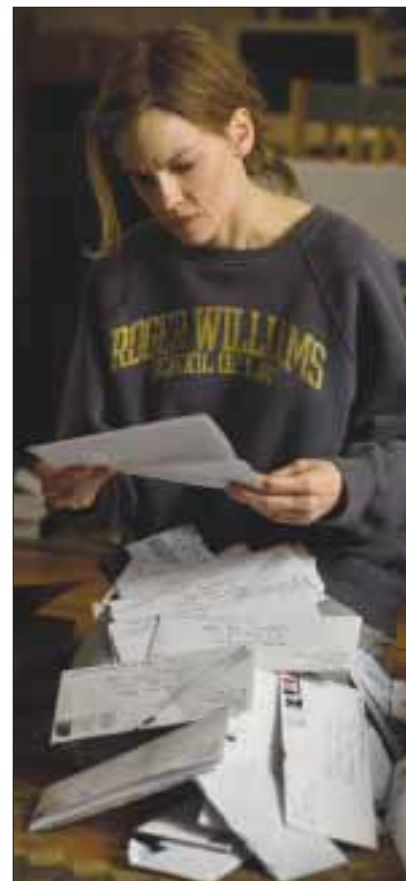
The actress doesn't strike a false emotional note and she gels convincingly with Rockwell as the hot-headed prisoner, who seems worryingly capable of the brutal crime.

Driver is a spunky sidekick, generating some much needed flashes of comic relief amid all of the legal wrangling: "I hate the damn legal system. It's so inconvenient!"

Screenwriter Pamela Gray stacks the odds heavily against Betty and Abra, so their valiant efforts leave us cheering in the aisles when it seems they might finally have discovered a flaw in the prosecution's case.

The seriousness of Kenny's situation is brought home when one character coldly observes: "If Massachusetts had the death penalty, he'd be dead by now."

On one point at least, the law worked in his favour.



**AGAINST ALL ODDS:** Sam Rockwell, left, as Kenny, and above, Hilary Swank as Betty in a tale of family loyalty

**CONVICTION**   
Certificate 15

PICTURE: BBC



**IT'S A WRAP:** Explorer Bruce Parry shows us how to dress for Arctic weather



## YOUR TV REVIEW ARCTIC WITH BRUCE PARRY: BBC2, 9pm, Sunday

■ BY ED HILL

THE recent spell of snowy weather demonstrated how rubbish we are at dealing with the cold in the UK, so it's nice to see people on the TV who have to live with it all the time. Bruce Parry, who made a name for himself living with indigenous peoples around the world, has chosen the Arctic Circle for his latest trip. So far he has met the Sakha horse people and Eveny reindeer herders of Siberia. As he was there during the summer months, the landscape didn't look particularly arctic. The lush green hills were filled with mosquitoes and Mr Parry's guides mostly seemed keen to neck down as many glasses of vodka as they could carry on an old army tank. Bruce demonstrated how many of the old mystical ways of the natives had been squashed during the time of the Soviet Union. The people are now

only just beginning to rediscover their spiritual past. The former Marine seems to have a unique way of bonding with the people he is studying. Despite the language barrier he managed to get one reindeer herder to open up and discuss how drink, modern Russian life and family breakdown had resulted in him returning to his roots to try to regain some self worth. The next episode saw him travelling to Greenland. This was much more familiar arctic territory, with broad landscapes of snow and ice. This time Bruce was spending time with the Inuit people, following their hunts for seal, walrus and polar bear, made a lot easier these days I imagine by powerful hunting rifles.

But like former programmes presented by Bruce, he highlights how these ancient communities are just as vulnerable as the rest of us to the attractions of the modern world with its flat screen TVs, cars and computers. It's understandable they should want as many of the comforts as the rest of us, but sadly it seems their heritage is soon forgotten. Greenland demonstrated this very clearly. As the ice melts (due to global warming), a land full of rich metallic deposits is revealed. Mining will soon be the main economy of the country and the old seal hunters will be a thing of the past. Already kids from broken Inuit families are being taken on confidence-boosting trips to teach them how to fish and reconnect with their ancestry.

## MOTORS NEWS



### What Car? Top Car is A1

AS BEFITS its model description, Audi's new A1 premium hatchback has landed the What Car? Magazine's prestigious Car of the Year title.

Now posing a real challenge to the BMW Mini, What Car? editor-in-chief Steve Fowler said: "The A1 is brilliantly targeted and brilliantly executed."

"More and more buyers are looking for smaller, more efficient cars, but with all the luxury trappings of much larger cars. That's exactly what Audi has given them – a super-stylish, high quality small car that's affordable and great fun, too."



### Hyundai plays three door trick with coupé

IT HAS been two years since Hyundai bowed out of the coupé market.

So a new coupé glamour car was well overdue and we'll get one later this year.

It's more than striking to look at too, because the new Veloster will have a unique three-door configuration – two main side doors and one rear side door for easier access to the rear seats, plus disguised exterior handle to maintain the coupé look.

It will be offered with a twin-clutch auto/manual transmission option.



### Seat refusing to jump on the VAT bandwagon

SPANISH marque Seat is blowing away New Year gloom with an extended VAT-free offer and VAT cuts, despite the UK tax rising to 20 per cent.

Various offers run until March 31 and are even available to small vehicle fleets as well as private buyers.

The VW-owned marque is pointing out too that Kent commuters into London can benefit from ultra-low emission and road tax exempt Ibiza and Leon E Ecomotive versions escaping the daily Congestion Charge for the capital – newly hiked from £8 to £10.



**GREEN MACHINE:** The Mitsubishi Colt Cleartec is more refined and quieter than its predecessor and offers further proof of the Japanese brand's development in the eco-friendly stakes

# Mitsubishi gives green light with Colt Cleartec

## ROAD TEST MITSUBISHI COLT CLEARTEC

BY STEVE LOADER

### STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Green rating	★★★★★

or a more upright five-door mini-MPV.

The latter in 94bhp 1.3 CZ2 Cleartec form is our test car and looks great value at £10,599.

In addition to keen pricing and Auto Stop & Go savings, you also gain economy and reduced emissions from low rolling resistance tyres, a higher top gear, improved alternator and lower viscosity oil.

These add up to just 119g/km of CO2 emissions or the lowest payable road tax band (£30/year) and average mpg in the mid-50s for the Cleartec.

You don't feel compromised by the eco features either; the Cleartec accelerates faster than its conventional sister model, no doubt helped by the narrower and harder tyres, and the car handles tidily on a windy road.

Mind you, acting the fool in this eco-friendly car exposes the Colt's slightly jittery ride, but this is a rare complaint. The car is more refined and quieter than before too, after intensive sound absorption work.

The revamp has cost some versatility after replacement of the folding/removable rear seats by a conventional fixed/fold flat arrangement, but this delivers more boot space without compromising head and leg room.



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08 08	CORSA 13 CDTi BREEZE 3DR, Flame Red, 41275 miles	£7295	£6995
08 08	CORSA 13 CDTi BREEZE+ 3DR, Flame Red, 16355 miles	£7495	£7150
08 58	CORSA 13 CDTi SXi A/CSDR, Silver Lightning, 16300 miles	£7495	£7275
09 59	CORSA 10 ACTIVE 3DR, Flame Red, 4000 miles	£7995	£7795
09 59	CORSA 12 ACTIVE 3DR, Star Silver, 7180 miles	£8995	£7995
10 59	CORSA 13 CDTi ACTIVE 3DR, Star Silver, 7750 miles	£9495	£9250
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08 09	ASTRA 18 SXi SPORTS HATCH 3DR, Red, 16800 miles	£8995	£8695
09 59	ASTRA 18 SPORTS TWIN TOP 2DR, Air Blue, 3320 miles	£14995	£11995
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10 59	ASTRA 2.0 VXR 3DR, Arden Blue, 5660 miles	£16995	£16995
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09 FORD FOCUS DIESEL HATCHBACK 2.0 TDCI TITANIUM 5DR (2008 - 2010) 18890 MILES	£11999	£9999	£2000
09 FORD FOCUS DIESEL HATCHBACK 1.6 TDCI TITANIUM 5DR (110) [DPF] (2008 - ) 18164 MILES	£11999	£10499	£1500
08 FORD FOCUS 2.5 ST-3 3DR 0 MILES	£13999	£13299	£700
09 FORD FOCUS HATCHBACK 1.6 ZETEC 5DR (2008 - ) 15610 MILES	£8999	£7999	£1000
09 FORD FOCUS HATCHBACK 1.6 ZETEC 5DR (2008 - ) 15610 MILES	£8799	£7799	£1000
09 FORD FOCUS HATCHBACK 1.6 STYLE 5DR (2008 - ) 14960 MILES	£7999	£6999	£1000
09 FORD FOCUS HATCHBACK 1.6 ZETEC 5DR (2008 - ) 15610 MILES	£8799	£7799	£1000
10 FORD FOCUS DIESEL HATCHBACK 2.0 TDCI ZETEC S 5DR (2008 - 2010) 18440 MILES	£16999	£15599	£1400
57 FORD C-MAX ESTATE 1.8 STYLE 5DR (2007 - 2010) 14821 MILES	£7999	£6499	£1500
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## PROPERTY NEWS

### Winter brings call to go online to cut bills

HOMEOWNERS using online energy plans are paying £140 a year less on average for heating and hot water and £229 less on total bills than customers on standard tariffs, according to new research by uSwitch.com

The news comes as UK families face higher energy prices and one of the coldest winters in a century, with each cold snap adding about £7 a week on to fuel bills.

However, while the typical household now faces an annual energy bill of £1,239 a year – up 3.8 per cent from September 2010 – online customers are typically paying £229 a year less for their total energy bills.

Tom Lyon, energy expert at uSwitch.com, said: “When winter fuel bills start to hit doormats consumers could be in for a nasty shock. They will be facing the combined impact of winter price rises along with a potential £7 a week additional cost caused by severe cold weather.

“The concern is that many will react by cutting down on heating and hot water, whereas they could cut the cost of these essentials by £140 a year by moving online.”

Mr Lyon added that online energy plans are “consistently the most competitive” on the market.

### Owners 'improving homes for the future'

DIY HOME improvements among Britain's property owners are fast approaching an all-time high, one expert has said.

Anna-Marie DeSouza, editor of Build It Magazine, said new DIY books, TV shows and celebrities had helped make renovations and interior design more fashionable and accessible.

“Now more than ever before, people are enjoying spending their time and money improving their home,” she said.

Meanwhile, a recent HSBC survey revealed that Brits are now more likely to ‘make do and mend’ than they were 12 months ago.

According to the research, 50 per cent of homeowners would seek a repair estimate on a broken household appliance, rather than splashing out on a replacement.

Ms DeSouza added that UK households are currently “investing in their homes” in an effort to “future-proof” their property for years to come.



# Buyers' confidence low as uncertainty continues

■ BY NICK AMES

A SURVEY of 5,287 homeowners by online property website Zoopla.co.uk has revealed housing market confidence is at a two-year low.

Despite this, more than half – 54 per cent – of those questioned said they expect house prices to rise over the first six months of 2011.

But this is down from the 81 per cent reported this time last year.

The website's housing market sentiment survey found that the number of homeowners who expect property prices to fall over the six-month period is currently at one in three, up from one in four last quarter.

Meanwhile, those surveyed expect house prices to grow by 1.9 per cent over the six-month period, down from an expected three per cent rise three months ago.

Many experts have predicted that the housing market will remain subdued in 2011, due to uncertainty surrounding the economy and the ongoing mortgage rationing by lenders.

The recent weather has also been bad news for the market.

December's heavy snowfall had a negative impact on many companies and housebuilder Persimmon was no exception.

The housebuilder, which is the UK's second largest by market value, said sales activity fell by 50 per cent in December, but said it had seen an encouraging start to the year.

The company reported a considerable increase in underlying profits for 2010, after turnover rose by 10 per cent to £1.57 billion.

Furthermore, completions were up to 9,384 in 2010 – compared with 8,976 the previous year.

Commenting, the company said: “It is too early in the New Year to assess the likely outcome of the forthcoming spring sales season.

“However, we believe that prospective purchasers who may have postponed visits to our



developments due to the harsh weather conditions prior to the year-end, will return during the coming weeks.”

In related news, the Halifax revealed UK house prices fell by 1.3 per cent last month compared with November.

The latest house price fall takes the average cost of a UK home to £162,435, the Halifax said.

According to the lender, which is part of the Lloyds Banking Group, house prices are now 1.6 per cent lower than a year ago.

## Parents can borrow to help kids move out

HOUSEBUILDER Barratt is aiming to help kick-start the housing market by launching a scheme that allows parents to borrow money to get their children on to the property ladder.

The initiative with Hitachi Capital (UK) PLC is designed to tackle the problems faced by young people who cannot secure mortgages without massive deposits.

The company announced the planned scheme in a trading update that showed its

average selling prices jumped by about six per cent to around £176,000 from July to December last year.

It completed 4,832 sales, down from 5,053 in the same period a year earlier, with almost three in 10 sales using shared equity schemes such as the Government's HomeBuy Direct initiative.

Barratt expects sales to be about £875m for the six months, slightly up on last year's

£872.4m, but its operating margin has doubled to five per cent.

Chief executive Mark Clare said: “The group has delivered a significant improvement in both average selling prices and operating margin, even though sales volumes have been affected by difficult trading conditions.

“We are on course to make further progress as we open new higher margin sites and continue to be value and quality-focused.”

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## Senior & General Appointments 29-31

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We are looking to recruit staff with relevant experience and a minimum of NVQ level 2. Experience caring for the elderly is essential.

Please call Miss Julia Carter (Home Manager) on 01303 254019 for further details or email CV to [cumbriahouse@ashwoodhealthcare.co.uk](mailto:cumbriahouse@ashwoodhealthcare.co.uk)

Subject to satisfactory CRB Check

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We are looking to recruit an enthusiastic and committed person.  
Must have minimum NVQ Level 3 qualification, and experience in caring for the elderly is essential.

Please call Miss Julia Carter (Home Manager) on 01303 254019 for further details or email CV to [cumbriahouse@ashwoodhealthcare.co.uk](mailto:cumbriahouse@ashwoodhealthcare.co.uk)

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### Box Office Supervisor (£17,000 - £18,500)

Theatre Royal Margate is seeking an organised and motivated candidate with excellent sales and database skills and a passion for the arts. You will ensure the efficient running of the Box Office, working with the Theatre Royal Margate team to increase and diversify the footfall into the theatre and its activities. This is a full-time position, for a fixed term of eighteen months, reporting to the General Manager in a small and busy organisation.

For an application pack please call 01843 282956, see our website [www.theatreroyalmargate.com](http://www.theatreroyalmargate.com) or email: [admin@theatreroyalmargate.com](mailto:admin@theatreroyalmargate.com)

Deadline for applications – Fri 4th Feb, 12pm

Interviews – w/b 7th Feb 2011

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The Spencer Wing is the independently owned and managed 22 bed private hospital situated on the QEOM Hospital site. We also have a 4 bed unit at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. The continuing growth of our business has resulted in vacancies for the following staff:

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To discuss these opportunities or to arrange an informal visit, please contact  
Liz Justice – 01843 234555 Ext: 62207

For job description and application form please contact:

Jo Edwards, East Kent Medical Services Ltd, The Spencer Wing  
QEOM Hospital, Ramsgate Road, Margate, Kent CT9 4BG  
Telephone: 01843 234556 Fax: 01843 296333  
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An experienced Commercial Manager is required to head up our team of estimators working as a specialist subcontractor in the social housing refurbishment sector.

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An exciting and challenging new position is available for the post of Senior HR Officer.

This person is required to lead the HR team in developing and delivering a comprehensive, high quality HR service for the college, which employs around 400 staff.

Providing employment advice and guidance you will lead on policies and procedures ensuring that best HR practice is in place.

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For further details and to apply online please visit our website [www.thanet.ac.uk](http://www.thanet.ac.uk) and click on 'Vacancies'. Alternatively contact the HR Office, Thanet College, Ramsgate Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 1PN or telephone our application line for an application pack on (01843) 605052

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**Interview date: 9 February 2011**

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Alternatively contact the HR Office, Thanet College, Ramsgate Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 1PN or telephone our application line for an application pack on (01843) 605052

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## Career opportunities at MidKent College

MidKent College based in the Medway Towns and Maidstone are seeking to appoint an outstanding individual in the following area:

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**Ref: M0210**

**Maternity Cover**

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**Medway**

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**CLOSING DATE: 12pm noon on Friday 21 January 2011**

MidKent College is working in partnership with RBLI Employment Solutions to support individuals who have a disability or health condition in the application, interview and employment with the college. If you would like any further information regarding RBLI, or require assistance with your application process then please contact RBLI on 0800 783 1144 or visit their website [www.rbli.co.uk](http://www.rbli.co.uk) for information, advice and guidance.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of employment is subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check in accordance with the College procedure.

Application forms and further details are available from [www.midkent.ac.uk](http://www.midkent.ac.uk). Alternatively, please e-mail [job.applications@midkent.ac.uk](mailto:job.applications@midkent.ac.uk). For individuals without access to e-mail or the internet please call the HR department on 01634 383102 (24 hour answer machine). In all communication with the College please quote the appropriate job title and reference number.

MidKent College is an equal opportunities employer



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### Telephone Sales Executives (Maternity Cover)

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You will be office based and working with an existing client base of advertisers where customer service is paramount, but you must also be able to search out new business to develop and grow your territory revenues and opportunities.

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ARCHANT KOS MEDIA  
Apple Barn, Hythe Rd, Smeeth, Ashford Kent. TN25 6SS  
Or email [ynnez.coton@kosmedia.co.uk](mailto:ynnez.coton@kosmedia.co.uk)

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We have an opportunity for highly motivated people to create and sell multi-media solutions in our market-leading portfolio of newspapers and magazines.

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We believe good customer service is at the heart of our success and we want to recruit people who can develop excellent business relationships and present effective and innovative ideas that will provide real value and response for our customers.

### Telephone Sales Executives x2

You will play the key role in selling advertising across our market leading portfolio of newspapers, websites and mobile products.

Candidates may possess a track record in telephone sales, combining excellent communication skills, tenacity and the ability to build relationships.

Ultimately, we need an articulate and assured sales person with a structured and positive manner.

Your might also be looking to enter media as a career within sale and this would be an excellent starting point.

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**Please apply with your CV and covering letter in the first instance to:**

Christine Davidson, Commercial Director  
ARCHANT KOS MEDIA,  
Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SS  
Or by email [christine.davidson@kosmedia.co.uk](mailto:christine.davidson@kosmedia.co.uk)

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# **your weekend guide to independent business**



ARCHANT KOS MEDIA



**buy local • shop local • support local**

## your weekend guide to independent business



buy local • shop local • support local

# Why the independent trader is more important than ever

THIS is our fourth supplement celebrating some local success stories and finding out what's in it for you, our readers.

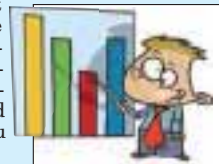
We discover that independent stores really do offer an alternative to the chainstores that dominate our town centres, offering you an alternative and more varied way to spend your hard-earned money.

Equally, we hope this supplement will inspire some of you to take the plunge and have a go at being independent yourself,

recognising the customer benefits that that can bring.

So this is a small glimpse into the world of the independent trader, often operating locally, and offering a unique service.

We live in difficult times financially, but there is no doubt that those who are successful recognise the importance of great customer service.. and that's where you can reap rewards.



### Page 4

Helping you spend and save wisely

### Page 4-5

The importance of shopping locally

### Page 5

A 25-year-old company selling blinds

### Pages 6

Making computers simple for all

### Page 6-7

Service has to be perfect: tattoos

### Page 7

Learning a trade that saves resource

### Page 8

You are a priority for insurance man

### Page 8-9

Local food brings so many benefits

### Page 10

Making the pub work for you

### Page 11

Garage service which sets standard

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■ BY THE  
INSPIRATIONIST

LET'S get real. The internet is fantastic. It means we're all connected; at least that's the theory.

For example: Did you know YouTube now has more viewers than regular television?

So – in theory – that means we can all have the benefits of TV advertising at virtually no cost. Website home pages without video are so 20th century.

All we have to do is shoot a short video, upload it to YouTube and we're away: right?

Well, not quite. While it's true that search engines love video and that Google and YouTube are the most powerful search engines, but the internet is just another medium.

In the same way you can buy advertising space in print, radio or TV and run a terrible advert that achieves nothing, so can you create a terrible video, put it up on YouTube and your website and lose customers or still have people visit your site and ignore you.

But what if there was a way to create a captivating, compelling video that got viewers really interested in you and your products or services because it was you there 'in person', winning over your audience?

Let me ask you a question: Would it be useful to know what it is about you that makes people warm to you; want to do business with you; remember you and talk about you to others in glowing terms? You bet it would. And if you're an avid networker, chances are you already know some of that already.

When commercial radio came to Kent in 1984, my company was out there writing and making the commercials. I clearly remember just how excited business owners in Kent were

# Is your personality YouTube-ready?

about this new medium for advertising. But the same problem existed then as exists now: without great ads, your campaign just wouldn't attract the attention of your audience.

The problem at that time was the quality of the ads. No one in the county had any experience of commercial radio, so we all had to learn from scratch. And whilst initial curiosity got people tuning in, if what they heard wasn't interesting, people would switch off. So one way of solving the problem then was by creating ads that got noticed, which is precisely what our company did.

What will work today if we want to advertise on YouTube? Well, virtually the same thing, although now, we are a much more sophisticated audience. We all speak media-ese. We see with our media-eyes and listen with our media-ears.

So we will have to raise our game if we are to win new audiences and new customers.

## Selling

We need to be even more understanding of the psychology of selling, the why of how to influence and persuade. We need to learn and understand the difference between interruption marketing and permission marketing and integrate the two.

The good news is that we now agree people buy from people, so we can forget hard sell. It's more about permission marketing, which means more gradually building up the trust, credibility, value and desirability of our service or products. And the best way to do that is to sell ourselves first.

After all, you only have to look at Richard Branson to realise that if the person behind the business is well-known, liked and trusted, selling the products becomes so much easier, even when – if you consider what Branson does – you change your business from music to airlines, or from mobile phones to credit cards. Your personality branding is the thing people remember and feel warm and friendly towards.

The same applies online. The growing number

of small business owners who have a great online presence, many of whom are working from home and combining family life with their online business, means it has to be a crucial opportunity for anyone wanting to grow their business.

So, if you have the urge to promote yourself as 'the face of your business', here's a quick check list of the top three fatal mistakes to avoid:

The biggest single mistake I see businesses making online is to buy the most effective search engine optimisation or Google Ad Words before optimising the landing content. Whether the content your visitors land on is text, pictures, audio or video, it must be compelling. You've got just three seconds to stop them in their tracks or you've lost them and wasted the money you've spent on getting them to look at you.

It's a big mistake to be anonymous. My advice is for your name, and your picture, but ideally, your video to be there on your home page.

And when you send out 'company' emails, make sure they're from you, even if you're part of a larger firm, because it's you that I have a personal relationship with, not the company.

Consider this: you search for an osteopath and you browse two different sites as a result of your Google search. One site has Larry on video welcoming you in a friendly manner, sounding experienced, looking professional, and offering what looks like a great service in nice surroundings. The other site has just text; no picture; no video. Which are you more likely to choose?

Mistake number three is to create a website that tries to sell your product or service (with the exception of online retailers, like Amazon, etc.). If you consider that what you sell is a personal service, then sell the value of an on-going relationship with you and nothing else. In Seth Godin's Permission Marketing (the bible for internet marketing) the single most important sentence he writes is: "Your website should be 100

per cent focused on signing up strangers to give you permission to market to them."

• **For free advice about personality branding, YouTube, interruption marketing and permission marketing, or for information about our unique personality development programme – designed to make you shine online, on YouTube, and on your website, email [qj@theinspirationist.com](mailto:qj@theinspirationist.com), or visit [www.theinspirationist.com](http://www.theinspirationist.com). Plus, for some free videos on how to present yourself better online and offline, visit our YouTube channel [quite stunning](#).**

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# Nothing beats face-to-face advice from someone you're able to trust

FINDING financial advice in this day and age is easy. From High Street building society posters to radio phone-ins, from newspaper pundits to online experts there is no shortage of the stuff.

Online may be easy and call centres can be quick (if you can get through), but nothing beats sitting down for a face-to-face chat with an expert you know you can trust and who will take the time to find out what you need and then help you find it.

Local advice, backed up by 30 years' experience, is on offer in Ashford from Simon Webster and his team at Facts & Figures Financial Planners, now based in new headquarters in Church Road, Ashford.

"There are so many different investment, savings and pension products out there that it is virtually impossible to recommend something without understanding the needs of the person sitting in front of you," said Simon.

"There is a great deal of difference, for instance, between advising someone who is looking for a long-term return and who can live with short term fluctuations and finding the right product for someone who may need their money back in a year's time and can't take any risks.

"Because everyone is different, we are committed to getting the best deal for every customer, whether that's in terms of a cheaper mortgage, a better pension, the right investment income or sound advice on reducing their liability to inheritance tax."

As well as being regulated by the Financial Services Authority, Facts & Figures is one of just three per cent of independent financial advisers that can describe themselves as 'chartered financial planners', an accolade of which Simon is understandably proud.



**TEAM WORK:** Staff at Facts & Figures Financial Planning with Minister for Immigration and Ashford MP Damian Green

Facts & Figures is very much a family business, with Simon's wife Pam playing a major role. The firm now employs nine people and was set up 17 years ago, although Simon has spent more than 30 years advising clients.

As well as independent financial and mortgage advice, Facts & Figures can advise companies on employee benefits as well as group life and pension schemes. The firm also offers advice on inheritance tax, life and critical illness insurance, health and private medical insurance and retirement planning.

At the start of a new decade Simon offered three pieces of advice to readers: "Make sure you set yourself a household budget and stick to it, ask for independent advice on finding a better mortgage deal than your current offer and make sure you are getting the right advice on your pension.

"With building society interest rates now hardly keeping pace with inflation, it's worth bearing in mind that the stock market climbed by about 25 per cent last year, which means there could be better long-term investment opportunities out there."

• Contact Simon by emailing [sw@fffp.co.uk](mailto:sw@fffp.co.uk) or calling 01233 813313.

# Why local reaps

Nick Ames explains why despite a revolution in how people spend their money online sometimes across half the world, there are still enormous social and economic benefits from spending your money closer to home

IN THE years before long distance and high-speed transportation and advanced communication technologies, almost all business exchanges took place in the near-by community.

Food was grown or produced in the area where the shop which sold it was situated and working with local businesses was a matter of convenience and even necessity.

Today, with global trade dominated by multinational corporations, it has actually become more convenient for most of us to purchase goods produced far from our homes, as the wide range of products in supermarkets shows.

Prices are competitive and what is on offer is all under one roof.

But there are many modern reasons to use local businesses as well, ranging from building community to keeping capital within local economies.

Using local businesses creates a relationship between neighbours and helps to build our communities.



The people who live and work in an immediate area share common ambitions and interests, such as keeping neighbourhoods safe and clean. They rely on each other in emergencies, and see each other on the street and at the store.

By supporting businesses owned and run by people within a community, people create an extra layer of interdependence, and make daily relationships deeper and more meaningful.

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# benefits for all



unhappy with a purchase they are sure to tell friends. So stores have to keep standards up to stop business falling off.

By using local products, people contribute to building local economies.

Money spent at a chain store means the profit from that transaction goes to a company at some distant location.

But when supporting local businesses, the proprietors are more likely to spend the money they make from purchase at another local business. In this way our money remains within our communities, building a an economy that enriches everyone involved.

Shoppers buying from stores which in turn bring in goods from local manufacturers, producers or farmers means everyone benefits.

By using local businesses the environment is helped as well.

Products that have been produced at distant locations need to be transported to stores. The environmental cost of all this shipping and trucking adds up. This is particularly true with fruits and vegetables, which, on average, are grown 1,500 miles from the supermarkets that sell them.

In addition to the cost of shipping, the infrastructure of storing and handling fresh produce uses considerable inputs of energy for refrigeration.

The chemical preservatives in many processed food products are also a direct result of a food distribution system that has strayed far from its localised beginnings.

In order to store food for extended periods of time and ship it to distant places, manufacturers need to pump it full of chemicals in order to extend its shelf life.

This is not the case when food produced by local businesses is purchased.

If a customer buys a substandard product from a business halfway around the world, they can be sure that the company doesn't genuinely care about whether it meets their needs, although they may follow good business practices and take responsibility for its malfunction.

But if shoppers buy something from their neighbour they're more likely to be accountable because they are in regular contact.

Also word gets around – if someone is

# A quarter century of quality

THE boss of an expanding Ashford company will be cutting cake instead of curtain fabric when his team celebrates 25 years in business this month.

Vic King, who heads up Kingfisher Blinds, based in Cradlebridge Drive, set up the blind and curtain concern at the end of 1985 and continues to lead from the front. He does all the measuring for the company's bespoke curtains and blinds and he is happiest when dealing with customers.

Although Kingfisher has built up a loyal following amongst homeowners who visit the Ashford shop, Vic and his team have also supplied blue chip companies, government institutions, universities, small businesses and retailers.

All the company's curtains and blinds are made to measure and the Kingfisher range includes the latest products from around the world.

"I have spent 25 years working with every type of blind and thrive on solving problems and meeting unusual requests," said Vic. "I have built the company by listening to clients, offering friendly advice and focusing on quality and service."

The family-based company includes Vic's wife Marion, who does much of the behind-the-scenes work, and son-in-law Alan, who takes care of the installations.

With expansion very much in Vic's mind he is about to announce the arrival of a new business development manager designed to launch the company into its second quarter century by looking for new opportunities.

"At Kingfisher we have no intention of sitting back and waiting for the recession to end," he said. "We are determined to get out there and find new customers and we are confident we have the products that will help us to do so."

Those products include a huge range of curtains, blinds and shutters in every fabric imaginable and with every possible convenience, including automatic operation.

"We are leading the way in Britain with motorised and solar screen blinds and we know how to use blinds to keep the warmth in or the heat of the sun out, which is one way in which companies can reduce their carbon footprint," said Vic.

"We are working with the Environment Agency in the Carbon Reduction Commitment scheme and we are a member of the British Blind and Shutters Association."

Kingfisher Blinds is also very aware of keeping users safe, and Vic's team automatically fits failsafe devices to new blind installations to protect young children from getting tangled in cords. The simple, low-cost devices can also be retrofitted to existing blinds to provide peace of mind to people who want to keep their children or grandchildren safe.

"We are committed to making blinds safe for everyone and will happily carry out a free survey of anyone's existing blinds, however old and regardless of who originally installed them," Vic commented.

• For your free survey or to find out more call Vic at Kingfisher Blinds on 01233 642971.



TALENTED CRAFTSMAN: Vic King

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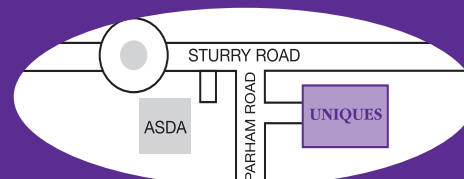
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# This expert may even be able to help answer your query for free

THE technological revolution that has changed the world in recent years has been so all-embracing that it is easy to forget there are those for whom logging on, downloading and Googling are not second nature.

It's true that many of those who once used to rely on their children to programme the video recorder now chat online, do their shopping without leaving the house and rattle off half a dozen emails before breakfast, but not all of us are quite so tech-savvy.

However there are still those who feel they have been left behind by a new technology that is putting an increasingly large chunk of the world beyond their reach as everything from their favourite television programme to their local library exhorts them to "go online to find out more".

Many of them will have been bought a computer, perhaps as a Christmas present, by family members who don't have the time or the expertise to explain how the new toy works – and that's where Ashford's Chris Anthony can help.

With 30 years' experience as a technical and network engineer working with companies including Microsoft and Hewlett Packard, Chris knows how computers work – but he also has a rare talent for passing that information on to newcomers.

Chris is happy to supply, install and train anyone of any age in all aspects of computing, but he specialises in what used to be called silver surfers – older users who are increasingly exploring the new horizons that technology can open up to them.

One of his clients, who lives in Eastry, recently

asked Chris to set up a second computer for him because the first one was too slow. No real surprise – except that the customer in question is 100 years old.

"There are huge numbers of people out there who would love to explore this new world but who just don't know where to start or who to ask for help," Chris explained. "I can do as much or as little as they need, from solving a one-off problem to installing a suite of programmes or providing training in a particular piece of software."

One of the concerns people have when it comes to asking for advice on anything to do

with that's why Chris is upfront about his charges and has been known to deal with simple queries over the phone for free.

"I am interested in helping people who want to learn more about what their computer can do," he said. "I wouldn't charge someone if it took me two minutes to talk them through installing a new programme because I would much rather they felt they could trust me to show them how to use it properly."

Alongside numerous technical qualifications, Chris has recently completed the Open College Network's mentoring course, which he said gave him useful new insights into communicating effectively with people.

The combination of a relaxed approach, wide-ranging technical knowledge and a local response to helping those who feel computing has left them behind is set to introduce many more people to the wonders of technology in the coming year.

• Contact Chris Anthony on 07771 812972.



# Decorating your own

Tattooing may draw mixed reactions from people but when it comes to running a business and customer service, understanding the customer and getting it right first time is essential. **Jill Hurst** spoke with tattoo artist **Sooze** about her work

A **SCULPTOR** from Teynham has joined the growing number of painters to diversify into the tattoo industry.

Working under her creative name of **Sooze**, she has launched **Extreme Voltage** in London Road, placing her passion for art at the core of the business.

She said: "My partner has run a tattoo business in Sittingbourne for many years and I've spent a lot of time there. I've always had an interest in tattoos but never thought of doing it until he suggested I set up on my own."

"For me the artwork and the quality of the artwork are very important. Tattoos are no longer just about pre-made flash work. People want customised pieces."

"So it's essential for people to have a very clear idea of what they want and understanding the artist's style is very important."

Sooze has an extensive portfolio including the work of one of her favourite artists – Gill



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# own personal canvas



Elvgren, one of the most famous pin-up and glamour artists of the 20th century.

She also specialises in work by fantasy artist Boris Vallejo and art nouveau painter Alphonse Mucha.

Gil Elvgren (1914-80) was a classical American illustrator. While his career encompassed many different fields of commercial art his fame is undoubtedly due to a series of pin-ups he painted over a period of 30 years for Brown and Bigelow, calendar publishers of St Paul, Minnesota.

Alphonse Maria Mucha (1860-1939) is most often remembered for the role he played in shaping the aesthetics of French Art Nouveau.

Born in Lima, Peru, in 1941 Boris Vallejo attended the National School of Fine Arts in his native country before emigrating to the USA in 1964. He has since done a great volume of work for the fantasy field.

While more and more artists are trying their hand at the profession Sooze cautions it's not an easily transferable skill.

"You can have an excellent artist but their skills aren't always translated onto the skin – it's a very different canvas."

Sooze says anyone considering a tattoo should do their homework before rushing in. "Look at the tattooist's work and check out their reputation. Make sure they've been trained under proper supervision."

"You must also make sure they have all the correct health and safety requirements in place, including health and hygiene, sterilisation and the correct equipment."

• **Extreme Voltage** is a contemporary studio offering a range of modern facilities. It is open Monday to Friday from 11.30am to 6pm and Saturdays from 10.30am to 6pm. Call Sooze on 07786 569752 for more details.



## Giving you the skills to go green

A NEW state-of-the-art Green Technologies Centre has been opened by Ableskills Ltd.

Just two months old, the centre is already helping to boost employment opportunities in the renewable energy sector.

It is part of a joined up approach, working with large companies such as Mitsubishi, Polypipe, Domus and Heating Plumbing Supplies (HPS) to try and encourage growth in the renewable jobs market for the south east.

Customers receive the best training and aftercare to ensure their own success and a positive experience for people installing green technologies on to their properties.

Ableskills Ltd has been trading for several years and has become one of the largest private training companies in the UK, with over 150 people going through different training programmes each week.

This is a real success story for the region and encourages more people to set up business and work to become successful in their own right.

The company has built up a superb reputation for training people in all disciplines of construction, from bricklaying, plastering through to electrics and plumbing and can push green opportunities further with this new centre and an investment approaching £1 million.

Jed Smith, from Ableskills, said: "We are ideally set to increase the skills in the south east, offer a route to employment or business start up and provide specific qualifications across a range of green technologies."

These include solar thermal, heat recovery systems, underfloor heating and rain-water harvesting.

• See [www.ableskills.co.uk](http://www.ableskills.co.uk) for more details.



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# Tim takes your health to heart when giving advice

FEW people would disagree that health insurance is a good thing; it's deciding where to go for it that can be more difficult.

It's one of those areas where good, local advice from someone who has the backing of a tried and tested organisation can make the difference between getting the cover you know you need and putting it off because you aren't sure who to trust.

Western Provident Association (WPA) is a leading UK health insurance company that is focused on delivering world class private health and dental insurance and has a heritage that goes back more than 100 years. Because the company has no shareholders, any surplus is invested in looking after customers.

Equally importantly, signing up with WPA does not mean talking to a faceless call centre operator or being forced to go online. Local representative Tim Chappell has customers across Kent and is determined to make sure people end up with the right cover for them.

"Each of my customers is important to me, not just as a customer but as an individual with particular needs and requirements regarding health care. I won't let anyone sign anything until I know we are providing something that will meet their needs."

It is that extra level of personal attention that makes WPA special, while the fact that there are no shareholders means premiums tend to be lower for similar levels of care.

The industry seems to agree that WPA pro-

vides customer service standards that are second to none, having presented the association with the British Insurance Award for Best Customer Care 2009.

Tim Chappell explained that health insurance was increasingly important at a time when the health service was under pressure, particularly for people who needed to stay in control of their lives.

"Even in the good times, the priority for the NHS is to treat as many people as possible, as quickly as possible, and that depends on fitting the patients into the system, not the other way round," he said.

WPA offers a range of different products that can replace or top up NHS care – WPA can even pay for NHS car parking – which makes it even more vital that someone with Tim's knowledge and experience is on hand to help.

"Health care is not an easy thing to organise and it takes time and experience to get to grips with what a new customer needs, how much they are prepared to pay and generally what kind of policy would suit their lifestyle best," explained Tim.

"There are plenty of companies that are just interested in making the sale, but as a local representative I take pride in talking to customers, spending time with them and making sure that they end up with the policy that suits their needs.

"I think that's what makes WPA different."

• To contact Tim Chappell, email [tim.chappell@wpa.org.uk](mailto:tim.chappell@wpa.org.uk) or call him on 01227 738863 or 07739 643569.



# Cream of the crop

The closer you get to the person who produces your food, the more you know and the more control you have over what you actually eat.

Produced in Kent has shown how easy it is to shop locally and support local producers, receiving great food into the bargain – and it's delivered to your door. Nick Ames takes a look at how people are turning their backs on supermarket food to sample the best the county has to offer



**CORNUCOPIA:** Visit Kent tourism poster promoting the Goods reared on Kent farms and fruit and veg grown in the Garden of England.

Acres of orchards and fields are one of the first things visitors to the county notice, while the many oast houses bear testament to a fine tradition of brewing.

Kent's beer is renowned across the world – hops are even exported to specialist breweries in the United States – and the county makes some of the country's best wines and ciders, too.

According to campaign group Produced in Kent: "Local customers have a choice of some

IN THE modern age of preservatives and additives, genetically modified crops and health scares, people are increasingly concerned about the quality and cleanliness of the food they eat.

Given the near impossibility of identifying the pesticides used and the route taken to grow and transport your food to a UK supermarket, foods grown locally make a lot of sense for those who want more control over what they put into their bodies.

These include locally caught fish, meat

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Thursday 24th	Boulogne	£25.00
Saturday 26th	Disneyland, Paris	£70.00
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Friday 11th	Royal Tunbridge Wells	£12.50
Saturday 12th	De Panne	£21.00
Wednesday 16th	Brick Lane Music Hall	£35.00
Thursday 17th	Boulogne	£25.00
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Sunday 10th	The Big Stamp & Scrapbooking Show	£23.00

Wednesday 13th	Warwick Castle	£32.00
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Friday 15th	Ostend	£26.00
Friday 15th	Southend On Sea	£18.50
Tuesday 19th	Squerrys Court	£17.50
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# so close to home



Shed in Canterbury, which offers an array of Kentish produce of the best produce anywhere in the world. The range and breadth of products available is second to none.

"The changing seasons provide us with a rich and varied diet, right on our doorstep – from spring lamb to the first strawberries, through to fresh cobnuts and winter vegetables."

John Ikerd, a retired agricultural economics professor who writes about the local food movement, says farmers who sell direct to local consumers need not give priority to packing, shipping and shelf-life issues and

can instead "select, grow and harvest crops to ensure peak qualities of freshness, nutrition and taste".

Eating local also means eating seasonally, he adds, a practice much in tune with mother nature – as well as giving consumers something to look forward to as fruits and vegetables come into season and can be enjoyed fresh.

Local food is often safer, too, according to agricultural researchers who discovered that, even when it's not organic, small farms tend to be less aggressive than large factory farms, dousing products with chemicals.

Small farms are also more likely to grow more variety, according to the research, protecting biodiversity and preserving a wider agricultural gene pool, an important factor in long-term food security.

So in the aptly named Garden of England, customers can tuck in to seasonal, traceable, high-quality fare: seafood from Dover sole to Whitstable oysters, Romney Marsh lamb, along with apples, pears, plums and more.

Tours and tastings can be enjoyed at vineyards such as Chapel Down in Tenterden, and Lamberhurst Vineyards, or the one at Biddenden, where cider is also produced.

Tours are also arranged at the Shepherd Neame brewery in Faversham, where visitors can find out how Kentish hops are turned into pints.

Sheps combines a heritage of 300 years with attention to modern environmental issues and claiming the title of Britain's first "green" brewery.

Some of its hops are harvested just a mile away and tastings are always available in the bar attached to the historic brewery.

# Reach for the sky – safely

WHILE good quality local services generally outshine one-size-fits-all offerings, some larger franchises are nonetheless based on good ideas.

Naz Cesur was so impressed with the ladder-free, pure water window cleaning system introduced by a franchise operation that he took it on in Ashford – and then bought it out.

It means the My Home cleaning service he now runs in and around Ashford is a truly local company, and one that sees Naz regularly rolling up his sleeves to make sure his team delivers the best possible service.

This 21st century approach to window cleaning uses a detergent-free, pure water cleaning method that gives windows a longer-lasting shine without the hassle.

From a health and safety view it ticks all the boxes by using a pole-based system that means the operator keeps his feet firmly on the ground, however high the windows. The system is flexible enough to tackle office blocks as well as domestic homes, and with no ladders the system is far safer.

It also works. When Naz was asked to clean two replica Battle of Britain fighters, ready for the 70th anniversary Memorial Day celebrations at Capel-le-Ferne, he was delighted to help out.

Naz cleaned the Hurricane and Spitfire free as a mark of respect for the veterans who fought off the invasion threat from the Luftwaffe in 1940.

He did such a good job that the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust, which runs the site at Capel, cancelled plans to have the planes repainted because they came up as good as new. He also cleaned the hardstanding ready for the annual ceremony, which was especially significant during the anniversary year.



**TOP FLIGHT:** Naz Cesur cleaning Hurricane replica at Capel

Battle of Britain fighters are a bit unusual even for Naz, who claims to clean "anything that stands still long enough", but he uses the same system to clean patios, brickwork, decking, drives, signs and fascias, as well as tackling messy jobs like clearing out the gutters.

The My Home system also means homeowners don't need to worry about ladder feet in the middle of their flowerbeds or guttering being bent out of shape.

My Home also uses technology to make life much easier for the customer. A text, email or phone message alerts the householder to the date of the next visit, which is helpful if a gate needs to be unlocked or the family dog needs to be shut in the house.

When it comes to paying there's no need to leave the money outside in a tin or miss your favourite programme when the window cleaner pops back to collect his cash.

Options range from standing order to online payment, all designed to make life as easy as possible.

My Home also cleans conservatories, again using the ladder-free system to let the sun through the glass without running any risk of someone's foot going through it.

• **Contact My Home cleaning services on 01233 612120.**

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# Pop in for a pint and a chat at friendly local

PART of the attraction of a pint at 'the local' used to be a chat with 'mine host', inevitably someone who had seen life and could be relied on to tell a good tale or two.

That scenario is harder to find these days as theme pubs and national chains with professional managers have increasingly replaced traditional landlords, but there are still corners of the Kentish countryside where a true local can still be found.

One of those quintessential English pubs is the World's Wonder at Warehorne, where John Roberts and his wife Kathy have put down roots after busy careers that have taken them as far afield as Dubai.

When it comes to a chat over a pint, John can drop more names and share more experiences than most, having rubbed shoulders with royalty as well as with The Who, the Rolling Stones, Elton John, Pink Floyd and Roxy Music.

The World's Wonder, which is on the Kenardington Road, also distinguishes itself by focusing on freshly-prepared meals using locally-sourced, free-range produce.

"We cook and prepare all the meals on the premises and we never serve packet foods or pre-packed meals," explained John. "Our business model demands a chef, not a cook, and we are delighted to have Ian Williamson working in that role to help us prove that the World's Wonder is 'where meals are to dine for'."

John left school in 1966 to join the Navy as a radio mechanic in the Fleet Air Arm and left four years later to work for an electronic busi-

ness machine company producing early versions of modern desktop calculators.

He then joined a company called Electrosonic, an industry leader in lighting control, audio and audiovisual systems.

The company boasted a top-flight client list, and it was as field service engineer that John met members of the royal family as well as a huge number of celebrities.

The company also introduced John to the world of microprocessor control systems which was to see him travel to Dubai as an electronic systems specialist in 1982.

Made redundant for the first time in the early 90, John began writing bespoke software for SCA, but when redundancy loomed again 10 years later, John decided it was time to pursue his ambition and set up a pub.

"Kathy and I decided that we would move to a beautiful part of Kent and set up a really great pub selling good beer and fine local food."

The couple have worked hard to ensure the popular gastro-pub has delivered on its promise of freshly-prepared meals using quality local ingredients, and events such as pudding nights, gourmet nights and game nights ensure a steady flow of customers.

The pub also plays an active part in the community, with John taking on the role of Father Christmas at the local school as well as supporting local events. The pub has a website at [www.worldswonder.co.uk](http://www.worldswonder.co.uk) and can be contacted on 01233 732431.



# Family firm aims

Every good garage knows that if you treat a customer well, they will keep coming back, and for the driver, finding the right garage is one of the most important decisions they can make.

**Malcolm Triggs** meets one of the most successful local garages in Kent to discover some of the its success secrets.

WHILE personal service from an established family business is often seen as the holy grail of our modern, pre-packed lives, there are times when things have to move on.

Ashford-based D&D Autos spent 25 years building up a loyal fan base as an independent, family-run garage on the outskirts of Ashford town centre, before moving to a purpose built unit on an industrial park.

The move from Victoria Road to a smart, sleek and very new-looking building in Moat Way, on Orbital Park, could have been seen as giving in to modern ways, but by keeping customer service at the core of the D&D Autos offer, Derek Pestrige and his team made sure it was quickly seen as a huge success.

It was a move that allowed D&D Autos to leave a jumble of different premises in an area where parking was a problem, facilities for customers were challenging and there simply wasn't enough space to offer more services.

Now based on the prestige Orbital Park, D&D Autos can offer a wider range of servic-

es while providing much better surroundings for customers, as well as the workforce – and all without sacrificing the tiniest bit of the local customer service that has set them apart since 1983.

D&D Autos services, repairs and carries out MOT tests on all popular makes of cars, and specialises in VW, Audi, Seat and Skoda.

As a family-run business, D&D Autos is quick to respond to local needs, which is why the garage is currently offering a winter health check that covers everything from coolant and brake fluid levels to anti-freeze strength, tyres, exhaust system and a visual check on brake pads and discs.

The free service takes just 30 minutes, which can be spent enjoying a cup of tea or coffee in the comfortable reception area.

The improved services on offer following the move to Orbital Park also resulted in D&D Autos winning Ashford Invicta Chamber's award for Excellence in Customer Service 2010, as well as picking up a Highly Commended award in the flagship Business of the Year category.

D&D Autos also offers computerised four-wheel alignment that could prove vital to anyone who has driven on Kent's pothole-

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- **Visually check cooling system for leaks**
- **Check antifreeze content**
- **Check drive belts (excludes cam belt)**
- **Check all fluid levels**
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- **Visually check front brake pads & discs**
- **Your Alfa Romeo will then undergo it's MOT test**



# to keep you on the road

crazed roads following the recent weeks of ice, snow and sub-zero temperatures.

Only the most careful or the luckiest drivers will have avoided all those potholes, which makes checking their wheel alignment a necessity for virtually all the county's drivers.

Correct wheel alignment is critical to safe driving, as well as making tyres last longer, reducing fuel consumption, improving handling and improving the driving experience.

Modern suspension systems are complex, and the only way to check the alignment of all four wheels properly is to use modern, high-tech kit of the kind to be found at the new Moat Way premises of D&D Autos.

It's another new service that the garage couldn't offer from the older, cramped premises, but can now deliver to all its loyal customers as well as to increasing numbers of new ones.

"We just couldn't provide either the quality or the choice of services we wanted to offer when we were based in Victoria Road, and when I couldn't find anything suitable in the town we took the plunge and designed our own building in Moat Way," explained Derek Petridge.

"It has given us the space and facilities we needed to provide our service across a wider range of activities," he said.

Contact D&D Autos on 01233 504765 or email [info@ddautosashford.co.uk](mailto:info@ddautosashford.co.uk).



**WORKING TOGETHER:** From left, workshop manager Matthew Petridge, business owner Derek Petridge and customer service manager Richard Petridge, of D&D Autos, outside the firm's new base in Moat Way on Orbital Park, Ashford.

## Early birds get free breakfast

TWO Sittingbourne businesses have joined forces to provide early morning workers with the most important meal of the day.

JCB Volkswagen Van Centre and Sittingbourne Cafe launched a temporary customer service initiative in 2009 to provide JCB's service customers with a breakfast voucher while their vehicle was being worked on.

But after more than 1,000 people used the 'early bird' service in the first year, it's now being introduced permanently.

Matt Rochester, aftersales manager at JCB Sittingbourne Van Centre, said: "Every month, nearly 100 service customers come to our St Michael's Road site enjoy a breakfast at the Sittingbourne Cafe while they wait for work to be carried out on their vehicle."

"The phenomenal success of the early bird initiative has taken us all by surprise and we've now decided to make it permanent."

"We introduced it for customers who need to be on the road early and we're delighted with the positive feedback."

Steve Beard, from Chatham-based Rainham Refrigeration, said: "It's a fantastic idea and means our vans are serviced without any impact on the working day. "The food is great and we'll be using this service every time our vehicles serviced or in for an MOT."

Matt added: "JCB's service department is open from 6am, but as the cafe opens at 7am, customers can enjoy refreshments in our waiting area until breakfast is served."

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